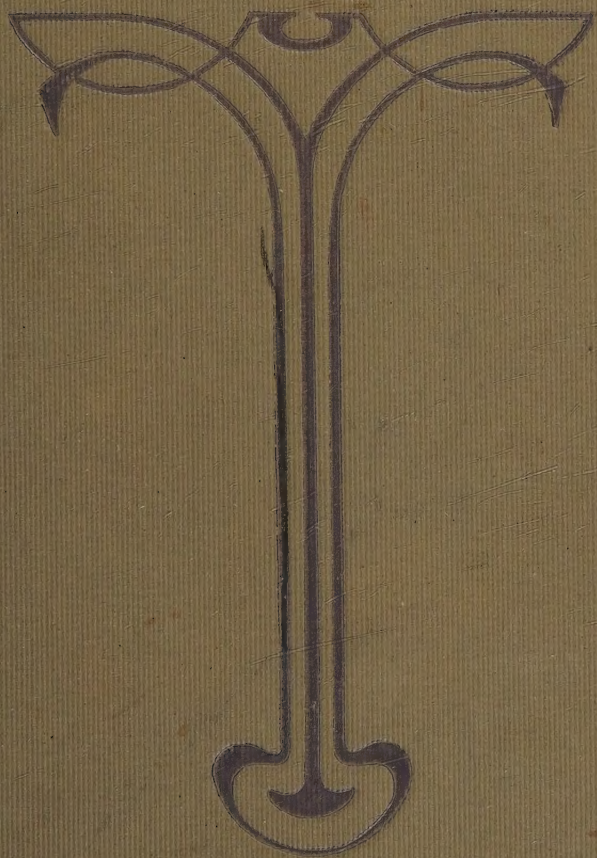


MAKERS *of* SORROW
and
MAKERS *of* JOY



DORA MELEGARI

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MAKERS OF SORROW
AND
MAKERS OF JOY

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MAKERS OF JOY

Deo favente

By
DORA MELEGARI

Authorized translation from the original French

By
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TO THE READERS
OF
"AMES DORMANTES"

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

This book, which I dedicate to readers of "Ames Dormantes," is addrest, like its predecessor, to all who love justice and seek happiness through finding themselves in harmony with the great truths and realities of life. The reflections which it contains have not been made with an arrogant presumption of having explained the mystery of our individuality, its origin, or future, but in an endeavor to establish spiritual communication between all those who share in the same hopes.

We are assisting today at the decomposition, or rather disintegration, of the old world, its morals and its principles. These changes have been long in preparation, but have latterly made progress with a rapidity that leaves us, on reflection, giddy and bewildered. However, the molecules composing the social structure remain the same, and if all things undergo transformation, nothing is ever destroyed. In this inevitable recomposition certain false points of view, from which many things were formerly judged, will disappear, and preju-

dices will fall like dead leaves from a tree, only to be reestablished in some other form.

Our horizons will thus be enlarged, and for some time to come we shall be forced to regard things in a truer and broader light. An ardent admirer of the Orient has said that Europeans who only know half a hemisphere have until now only half thought! Have we always merely half thought? Evidence of the incompleteness of our cerebral perceptions is borne in upon us at times with such force that our ignorance becomes a painful truth. Even in the simplest questions which were accepted as axioms by antecedent generations scepticism has penetrated sincere minds and upright consciences. Old methods of expression no longer satisfy us. We want fresh forms to express new thoughts that are germinating in our brains, and having only the old words at our disposal we distort them in an endeavor to give them a meaning which they never held before.

Man is tormented by a longing to do away with masses of obsolete forms of reasoning, narrow ideas and ready-made opinions that successive generations have transmitted to him, without his having even analyzed their meaning. And yet, he continues to repeat me-

chanically in a discouraged voice, where the ring of conviction is wanting, the phrases of his forefathers. Nor has he the courage bravely to attack the formulas of a dead psychology in order to explain, enrich, and simplify them.

This older psychology which divided men dogmatically into good and bad, wise and foolish, strong and weak, pure and impure, atheist and believer, contained too many, or too insufficient, shades of differences. Would it not be better and more practical to divide men henceforth into two new classes, corresponding to the future tendencies toward which we are drifting, "Makers of Sorrow and Makers of Joy," since every day it becomes more evident that this classification will become the true measure of a man's worth?

Christianity seems foremost in returning to simple formulas and concentrating her forces on two principal ideas: The fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man. Hence brotherly love tends to become, and a thousand symptoms indicate its acceptance as, the true touchstone of religious life. Moreover, logic demands universal fraternity, because to refuse to recognize the visible brother is equivalent to denying a common and invisible Father.

From this deadlock there is no exit. The time is approaching when men—outside of questions of politics and religion—will learn to say “we” and feel ashamed of the perpetual “I.” Even today, if in real life or in fiction, living or fictitious characters unduly display their emotions, trials or difficulties, as though their particular condition must be of supreme importance to the whole world, their attitude irritates others and fails to awaken public sympathy. The giving of such weight to personal sensations seems to the modern mind a puerile weakness. We are not moved, as we formerly were, by the poet’s griefs and lamentations.

Each soul, each intelligence and each conscience has of itself—at least for the spiritually minded—a real value. To diminish this value is to arrest all moral progress. But for each of us the soul, intelligence and conscience of another should possess a value equal to our own.

When man feels in his own heart the pulse-beat of humanity, the road to relative happiness will most probably open before him. Until now he has been groping about in his efforts toward goodness and perfection, and he still follows obscure paths where a fugitive

brightness, flashing upon him in one instant, is eclipsed in the next.

It is his destiny, perhaps, never to behold in this world the dazzling light of complete truth; but it is certain he feels within himself that no limits are set to the possibilities of deepening and enlarging his life, and that one day he will arrive before those luminous doors, behind which truth is shining.

An ardent search to discover the true meaning of destiny elevates and ennobles a man. Should he doubt of his immortality, by this pursuit he will at least be helped to conquer scepticism. But there is another means that is more simple and within the reach of us all—that of never causing sorrow and of being always and everywhere a perpetual source of joy. If this ideal became the dominating note in our lives, how many tears would be dried, and what new and beautiful blossoms would gladden the garden of our hearts.

DORA MELEGARI.

Rome, March, 1905.

I

MAKERS OF SORROW DEFINED

Temer si dee di solo quelle cose,

C'hanno potenza di far altrui male.—*Dante.*

Suffering is the great educator; without suffering the human soul becomes a waste and barren field. Sorrow is the rain which, penetrating the depths of the earth, fructifies the seed. Happiness, like the sun, brings with it warmth and light, and under its influence, plants and trees flourish. Man has need of both suffering and happiness. If constant prosperity retards his evolution, continued misfortune arrests the growth of his nature, preventing it from blossoming and bearing fruit to the full measure of its capacity. Hence, men also need the warmth and sunshine of seasons of joy.

But how establish a just balance? How equally dispense smiles and tears, that to each may be given a just proportion? However science may make progress in the future, and however perfect the social system may become, this equal division will ever remain an ideal

dream. The great Distributor of joys and sorrows will always dispense them according to His wisdom.

Man, however, can in a measure avoid suffering, first by learning to love himself in the proper way, thus eliminating from his life useless griefs and annoyances, and, secondly, by making it a duty to avoid, in as far as he is able, bringing sorrow into the lives of others.

We can today no longer accept sufferings that come from injustice, bad faith, intolerance, jealousy and wickedness, as trials sent directly by God, to punish us for our unfaithfulness and disregard for his commandments. This conception of the Middle Ages is rejected by modern thought; for we know that the wounds that bleed are inflicted by the heartlessness and evil intentions of our fellowmen. Why should a human heart be filled with hostile sentiments and envious desires for his neighbors' undoing? If man could only realize the sorrow he causes, he would perhaps learn self-control, and would reflect upon the responsibility he assumes when he yields to unworthy sentiments.

But to become conscious of the results of his actions indicates at least a more or less active conscience. Now, there are many persons who

stifle conscience, if indeed it is ever really heard by them. To know that they are wounding another suffices to fill them with a desire to increase the pain. In any case, they are absolutely indifferent to the heart-aches they cause. To make others suffer appears to them to be a mark of power; in their eyes—and often they have very beautiful eyes—there is a wicked gleam, and their cruel hands are used in a way that suggests an ability to strangle their victims. Neither reason nor pity can touch their hearts; nor any amount of reflection make them see clearly their responsibilities. Only a crushing blow might awaken them. It is not for this class of person that I write, but for those who, although they make others suffer, even cruelly, feel, notwithstanding, in the depths of their souls, vague aspirations toward goodness, justice and upright living.

“All our sorrows come from others.” This pessimistic affirmation of a man to whom life could teach nothing more is partly true, but to render it complete we must add, “and all our joys as well.” In fact, souls that are capable of feeling the beauty and charm of solitude are rare. The words *beata solitudo*, *sola beatitudo* are understood by the elect only, and

even those who seek solitude, and to whom hours of meditation are necessary, can not for long endure separation from their kind. Lacordaire has said: "Nothing great is accomplished without solitude"; but the hours that one strives to render great are rare, and how many hearts ever even aspire to noble aims.

Whatever may be the secret tendencies of the spirit, the greater part of a normal existence is spent in contact with other men. We need one another, and are consequently one for the other a constant source of sorrow or of joy.

Even absolutely independent beings, who belong to no community, who have thrown off the yoke of family ties, also find themselves, except in cases of exaggerated misanthropy, subject to the same conditions. We must have attained to a high degree of evolution and enjoy intimate communion with God and with invisible friends in order to feel indifference toward variations of humor in other men, and be able to support their injustice and defects with serenity and indulgence. But such mental conditions are rare, and the greater portion of humanity recoils from unpleasant contact, expanding when in touch with what is affectionate, encouraging and gentle. This is an overwhelming truth. The Soul trembles in

reflecting upon how much we contribute to the individual happiness or misery of our fellow-men.

Were it possible to make a minute examination of all the phases of one's past life—of our sorrows and our joys, of our steady march in the narrow path, or of the straying into forbidden fields that advanced or retarded our moral progress, of the unsuspected tendencies that awoke for a time in us—and could we remember the halts and sudden bounds of our spiritual and intellectual development, the days of hope and the days of discouragement that succeeded each other without apparent cause, and which, each in turn, elevated or lowered the temperature of our spiritual life, we could then realize to what degree the thoughts and words of others act on the oscillations of our being. Men are subject to the influences of various forces which act and react upon them; to strong invisible forces, to those of their own Ego; to the forces of antecedent careers that perhaps existed; to the force of inheritance, and, lastly, to the influences of their kind. The last mentioned are more easily understood and analyzed.

Parents, teachers, friends, even people we do not know, contribute to our pleasure, or

bring sadness into our lives—the former by guidance; the second by the thoughts they inculcate, and by their choice of books for us to read; the third, by sentiments; while the latter represent public opinion that equally exerts a marked influence upon our moral bearings. From the day of his birth to the hour of his death man must remain the prey of others. If the circle of influences to which he is subjected be restricted, it plays a greater role in the formation of his character; if more extended, its effects are complex, indirect, and tho not so apparent are none the less real.

In the formation of our souls, and in the vicissitudes of life, the part played by others is immense, even tho we are not conscious of it. Those who escape the domination of environment fall victims to the influences of the world at large—through the current of universal thought, from which there is no real avenue of escape. The most ardent defenders of their independence must, of necessity, experience certain joys and sorrows through the medium of others, unless they have suppress within themselves all sentiment, and feelings of the senses.

The influence for good or evil exerted by contact with others is undeniable, and yet the

contrary is equally true. For happiness or unhappiness resides in a man's own heart, not only because of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction he derives from the richness or poverty of his inner life and communion with the divine, but because, in cultivating a certain philosophy, he learns to feel and enjoy the warmth and brightness radiated by human sympathy, and also to protect himself against the icy winds of hostility with an armor of forbearance and patience. Should he, however, become pessimistic, and yield to the force of his impressions, he necessarily only augments the suffering caused by others.

In one word, then, however great and decisive may be the influence of others on his happiness, on his misfortunes, and on the moral direction of his life, man, in a large measure, shapes his own destiny. He may endeavor to escape responsibility by seeking refuge in books and memories. But what are books but the thoughts of others? What are memories? Only recollections of days spent with others, and the suffering or satisfaction they may have occasioned us. Man's only hope, then, of assuring his happiness and avoiding unnecessary suffering, lies in regu-

lating and modifying his relations with his fellowmen.

There will ever remain, whatever amelioration may be hoped for in the relations between men, a series of miseries from which no one escapes—poverty, illness, and death. Often all three can be brought about, and even hastened, by another's effort. It is certain, however, that, independent of the ill-will of our own kind, man is destined to suffer and to witness suffering, to die and see others die, and this alone suffices to render his destiny tragic. Stoicism and resignation can teach him to suffer courageously and with dignity, but nothing can teach him to witness, without intolerable anguish of soul, the sight of those he loves suffering. It is far easier for him to see them die.

Without being able to welcome with joy the death of loved ones, as did the Ancient Egyptians, those who are profoundly religious find in a belief in a future reunion, and the entrance of the departed into a life of bliss, consolation for temporal separation. For them the dead are not absent, only invisible.

No hope, however, soothes the anguish caused by the living sorrows of those we love,

for it is an anguish that tears the heart, and the strongest will is powerless to stifle it. So long as we may struggle and contend for our loved ones against poverty, failure and illness, we are sustained by the hope of success; but before the inevitable we must drain the cup of bitterness to the lees, while an intolerable feeling of helplessness tortures our souls. Brave hearts cultivate stoicism, in order to bear courageously their own sorrows; and perhaps because of this they suffer more keenly, for anguish not outwardly betrayed eats into the depths of the being.

These valiant hearts, however, are the exception. The mere thought of illness dismays certain people who see in death only the "King of Terrors," and these same timid, trembling souls do not hesitate thus to cause others, who are also destined to sorrow, illness and death, devouring and useless suffering. There is something tragic and almost puerile in the sufferings we inflict upon each other, knowing as we do that all alike are condemned to die, and who can be sure of the morrow? Living only for one's self without thought of others, shutting one's self up in selfish satisfaction, represents to many supreme wisdom. These think themselves in-

dependent, while in reality they are slaves, for, even in the most personal and material pleasures, the cooperation of others is indispensable, be the pleasures what they may.

The joys of satisfied ambition depend upon the admiration of our fellowman; those of love upon the tenderness and kindness of the object of our affections; those of personal comfort upon the intelligent and organized work of others, and so on indefinitely. From this contact and dependence there is no escape. The fact once thoroughly understood, intelligent educators of youth should undertake to work for the diminishing of human suffering by awakening consciences on this point, and by forcing young people to recognize the enormous responsibility that rests upon them for the many sorrows that sadden the world.

The day will come when every sincerely good human being will be as careful not to be a maker of sorrow as not to commit deeds that are dishonest and cruel. The desire not to aggravate the misfortunes of another is necessarily limited to one's immediate surroundings. Man can not see far beyond the reverberations of his actions. The least movement having, however, an indirect and indeterminate influence on the general movement, it

is possible that good done to one person may result in misfortune to an unknown victim. For this reason Renan relates in his "Souvenirs" that he decided never to recommend anyone for fear of committing an injustice. But in carrying this theory too far, one only arrives at a deplorable state of selfishness, without having reestablished the reign of equity.

Man, even today, is a being extremely limited and perhaps will always remain so, for the sphere of his actions has also its limits. His thought alone can penetrate the horizon of his sight, and spend itself in the beyond. But, practically speaking, his neighbors are those whose lives touch his, either through ties of family, of friendship or of common interests. If he will only make it his duty, without losing touch with humanity at large, not willingly, at least, to bring unhappiness into the lives of those dependent upon him, an immense step in advance will have been made, and a large part of the suffering that weighs heavily upon mankind will be lightened. But how to persuade men to this resolution, particularly those whose education can not be unmade, and who have lived hitherto quite unmindful of the consequences of their character

and their conduct in life? The greater number never even think of the wrong they may have done; and only a few rare and sensitive souls would feel remorse for having either wounded, discouraged or afflicted others.

There are those who, on their path through life, quietly trample under foot the little flowers that grow by the wayside. Their brutal hands break and bruise all that comes in their way, and put aside with scornful indifference obstacles that annoy or impede their progress. The violent, the sullen, the unjust and the jealous, torture the lives of others quite unconsciously, so freely is it admitted that detestable dispositions of this class do not debar possessors of them from being esteemed. This is exactly a point on which humanity needs to be reformed.

Defects of character should be considered moral blemishes and treated as such. Public opinion alone can bring about a change in our manner of regarding these defects. The great essential is to change the current of thought, and, however feeble the beginning, it will with time grow and eventually will control men's minds. When once admitted that to torment one's neighbor is equivalent to stealing his purse, people will not so easily give way to

their irritable, imperious, intolerant and unjust tendencies. One particular class arrogates to itself a monopoly of the above license, even experiencing a strange sort of pride in what they dignify with the name of courage and frankness, and this perhaps in all good faith. This faith, nevertheless, is based on such misleading reasoning that we can attach no importance to its premises.

Public opinion, therefore, is the only remedy for the many evils men bring upon each other; and, seeing the necessity of establishing a new current of thought on this subject, each one must do his or her share. To analyze the motives and feelings that lead men to torment each other is the first step to be taken; the second is to open their eyes to the consequences, so often disastrous, of their words and acts. In one word then, man must become conscious of his condition, for to act unconsciously is the greatest stumbling block to his evolution.

It may be objected that character is formed through suffering, and, in endeavoring never to cause another sorrow, we risk the loss of all moralizing influence, the result being a general weakening of the faculties, especially those faculties of reaction so necessary to the

physical, mental and moral health of the individual. Suffering is wholesome.

We need not concern ourselves as to the last argument; for suffering will always exist, Providence, or destiny, allotting it in a certain measure to every one of us. But the first part of the objection is correct, and in life's education we must learn how to touch and wound certain feelings, even until they bleed, thereby strengthening the character by imposing effort, renunciation and work; everything in fact that perhaps at the moment strangely resembles suffering. Children possess astonishingly just perceptions on this subject. In nearly every case they are much more devoted to parents who are strict, provided they recognize under their apparent rigor a spirit of justice and kindness, than, in truth, to a mother or a father who, to avoid displeasing children, permit them to lie in bed of a morning, neglect their studies, and waste their moral and physical force in pleasure, and become the children's worst enemies. Parents thus by foolish indulgence and short-sighted weakness run the risk of irremediably ruining the future of their sons and daughters. Such parents merit to be placed among the worst makers of sorrow.

But all sound reasoning supposes an intelligence capable of comprehension; for the most evident truths wrongly applied, produce more serious results than a lie. Thus food is indispensable to life, and air to the lungs, but to gorge a child with food, or expose it to a bitter north wind for several hours, will hardly conduce to strengthening it physically; the same may be said for over-indulgence in anything. The wish to spare those we love the difficulties they should vanquish, and all occasions that require effort, is the worst service that could be rendered them, especially in the case of children and young people. We should on the contrary invent obstacles if their conditions of life do not provide these. A cutting word or a severe criticism acts as a stimulent, and not to know how voluntarily to cause a moment of suffering when the occasion requires it is to love unwisely, or otherwise evince a deplorable lack of comprehension.

But between a merited rebuke, administered to produce a salutary effect, and spiteful words born of unjust suspicions, jealousy or even worse, there is no comparison.

The first resembles the remedy that heals even tho bitter to the taste. The second is the wine that poisons and kills.

But some will say that those who have spoken the most scathing truths have done the most effective work, and how many souls that the soft words of a gentle shepherd would leave unmoved have been awakened by rough, fiery speech.

Men of brusque, severe address are made of the stuff of the Apostles, and in expressing themselves in burning words they are carried away by their convictions, and not actuated by a spirit of unkindness, intolerance or injustice. It is certain, however, that their influence depends upon the value and strength of their own characters, and not upon the brusque, hard language with which they clothe their teachings and their criticisms. With more gentleness and indulgence the same effect might have been produced with even more telling results, but in some cases, and in certain circumstances, when dealing with soft and lethargic natures, it may be that violence is necessary in order to awaken their consciences; they need the physical spur of a loud voice, a rude word, and a brutal manner. This fact has been verified with regard to children. Later in life, when the spirit of criticism has developed in an individual, the severity of a reproach destroys its effect.

From the beginning, however, a clear line of demarcation must be drawn between those who wantonly cause suffering through altruism and those who are makers of sorrow through selfishness and thoughtlessness. The former cause suffering with intention, even if they sometimes err in the forms and methods they employ. The latter resemble a blind man who sets fire to everything he passes without seeing the disaster he causes. Such unconscious criminals are, of all men, the most to be pitied, for one day they may find themselves face to face with the irreparable, a day when, their eyes being opened, they will see clearly and distinctly the responsibilities they have incurred.

II

UNCONSCIOUS CRIMINALS

“Truly if man could see the consequences of all his bad actions, he would turn from them with horror.”—*Imitation of Boudha.*

Ernest Renan expresses himself in these terms when speaking of religious education: “Our children have been brought up under the influence, and in the shadow of Christianity, but how will it be with our grandchildren who must inherit only the shadow of a shadow, and that very dim.” We are now in this shadow of a shadow, and in truth it is very faint. However, religious instruction is still given, either from conviction or for appearance’s sake and in certain social classes the young are taught the Ten Commandments. The majority of people, however, are inclined to think, as did their fathers, that certain laws in the decalogue do not concern them, particularly those commandments that forbid stealing and murder. But religious instructors force them to consider these commandments by demonstrating how one’s neighbor may be robbed without actually taking any of his personal possessions,

by injuring his reputation and belittling his capabilities, by distracting him from the work by which he earns his livelihood; by withholding payments due to him, or by bargaining for an unjust reduction when purchasing his wares. Examples of this kind could be cited without number, each representing a separate theft—unconscious perhaps, but none the less real and pernicious in its after-effects.

When explaining the law “Thou shalt not kill,” teachers are more embarrassed and become less clear. Every thought of hatred, they say, which implies a desire to do away with an enemy who thrusts himself in our path or becomes a disturber of our peace, should be likened to homicide. But if men murder more frequently in thought than with a dagger or a firearm, such murderous tendencies are nevertheless rare, and while they reveal violent, rancorous or designing hearts, in their effects at least they are harmless. Those whom one would like to kill are ordinarily those most loath to leave a world from which their enemies would wish to banish them.

There is another method of murder, however. A son who cheats at cards, or a daughter who dishonors her name, may bring about, or hasten, the death of their parents, and certain

cruel betrayals in love have sometimes the same result. The trusted partner who ruins his confiding friend is often the direct cause of a fatal illness. It would take too long to enumerate all the tragic occasions which may make a man responsible for cutting short the life of a fellow being. Happily, the above are exceptional cases. The majority of good people, or those passing for such, need never reproach themselves with having dishonored, betrayed or ruined another. They move through life with a serene consciousness of having never broken the Sixth Commandment, wearing an air of injured virtue if the contrary is even suggested in their presence. A moral law that they are not conscious of having ever infringed does not concern them, and is meant only for criminals hunted by the police, or unfortunates whom the prison shelters.

Is this perfect peace of mind justified? Are we quite sure that this commandment does not concern us, or that, in addressing himself to his own people, Moses, under divine inspiration, spake words that were inapplicable to the greater part of humanity? It is more likely that the command was address to all men, and that it related to the temptations and possibilities for evil common to all.

There is in life (as I have said before*) a serious side of which we are rarely conscious. If we could clearly realize this fact, the whole ordering of our existences would be made quite different. I allude to the far-reaching effects of words and actions—and, who knows? even of our own thoughts. Is it not an appalling thought that everything we say or do has an immediate reaction that influences our own destiny or that of another? And it is just in this reaction that we must seek for the application of the Sixth Commandment to all human nature, and see why we are so often misguided when we apply it only to one particular group of individuals.

Whatever be the religious, philosophical or positivist doctrines that govern individual lives, there are certain ideas that are common to all men. Nature, heredity and the influence of our surroundings cause these likenesses. In any case, it is evident that all humanity experiences the same sorrows. Sometimes they may differ in their joys, but not in their sorrows, for here all men suffer alike. Like suffering, death is a great leveller, and “*La garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre*

* See chapter “Makers of Sorrow Defined.”

n'en défend pas nos rois.''* The wretched and the great alike shed bitter tears. Their hearts ache and bleed in unison under the same grasp of sorrow. Hence each can measure the sufferings of another, and recognize its ravages in the physical organization.

If it be true that we shall find in the beyond a kingdom of justice, where all the secret actions of men, and the consequences of these actions, will be weighed in a just balance, there are, I fear, some unpleasant surprises awaiting us. Among those murderers whom Dante placed in the seventh circle of Hell, in a river of boiling blood: "*Lungo la proda del bollo vermiglio ove i bolliti faceano alte strida,*" we shall perhaps discover faces that we could never have supposed would be found in that sinister cohort. Should the great poet ask those lost souls for the miserable story of their past sins, many could plead neither mad passion, blind jealousy, nor unbridled ambition, for they were unconscious assassins.

But the man of to-day, to what point is he justified in declaring himself unconscious of his acts, pleading ignorance, and declining responsibilities? Is it not his first duty as a

* Malherbe.

civilized being to *know* what he does, and to be conscious of his acts and of their consequences?

There are, without doubt, involuntary sufferings for which no one is responsible, and also salutary sufferings* that it is sometimes a duty to inflict. Which of us can be certain, however, of never having consciously, or needlessly, caused suffering or shortened lives that touch our own? In certain cases, these sorrows were passing, and the repentance of those who were responsible for them has obliterated all trace of them and even all memory of the wrong done. But certain individuals assume the right, continually and perseveringly, to afflict those who never in any way harmed them. Besides the dishonor, ruin and innumerable other catastrophes that certain ill-natured and spiteful individuals bring upon the lives of others, there exist an infinite number of gnawing sorrows that men inflict upon each other, without even the excuse that they are exercising the law of self-preservation, that inferior and cruel law behind which the most unbridled selfishness seeks shelter. One can trace, it seems to me, the larger part of these useless and unnecessary sorrows to an incom-

* See chapter "Makers of Sorrow Defined."

plete formation of character, and also to our habit of not realizing the impression that our acts and words produce upon the feelings of others.

That the number of suicides is increasing is a well-known and undeniable fact. The causes for these,—cases of passion excepted,—are not the same as formerly. Acts of suicide committed in order to escape dishonor have diminished, while suicide committed to escape from illness and want, has increased five-fold. The word “honor” is still composed of the same letters, but its signification now varies, and its limits have been astonishingly extended. It is no longer a “steep and shoreless isle” from whence none return who once have departed. It is now a vast plain, the limits of which are only faintly defined. Consequently fear of expulsion has ceased to trouble men’s consciences. On the other hand, the larger part of humanity have become ashamed to practice resignation, which is regarded in modern thinking as a virtue to be practiced only by the weak and incapable—so that when the clouds gather men flee from poverty and suffering through the silent gates of death. They who have taught men to forget the beauty and grandeur of patience, ought rather

to have foreseen that this new doctrine can only bring despair to the sufferer, a despair that our best social laws are incapable of relieving, for physical and moral suffering always escape their control.

Perhaps the scorers of resignation did foresee the result of their teaching, esteeming it expedient that useless members of society should do away with themselves. In this case they cannot be accused of levity or heedless conduct. They, evidently, have not worked in vain, and their influence on souls has been real and telling. The responsibility for another category of suicides,—the result of domestic troubles, alas! too frequent in our day,—can in a way be attributed also to these teachings. I do not intend to speak of conjugal betrayals, for they have a code of their own. It is a question here only of the torture that members of a family inflict upon one another, and which sometimes grows so wearing, that the victims of these unhappy homes prefer death to a life of strife and misery.

The contempt now openly exprest for the qualities of patience and resignation, contributes, without doubt, to such accidents, but other factors also play their part, namely, lack of self-control, and an irascibility to

which in these days people dare to give free expression, disguising it under the name of "nerves." "In my youth," said an outspoken woman, "neurasthenia was called plain bad temper." This sweeping statement is hardly correct, but there exists, undoubtedly, some foundation to it.

How many things, formerly considered disgraceful, are pardoned to-day with astonishing facility as due to "nerves?" To be accused of impatience, irritability, injustice and even bad faith, is no longer an insult; one pleads "nerves." This magic word explains and excuses everything.

Nobody appears to feel any responsibility for anything, for everyone has nerves, and all are tempted, at certain moments, to give them free rein. A reaction against this undue importance given to nervous disorders is showing itself in the medical world, and methods of cure, other than humoring patients, are being resorted to by specialists who are endeavoring to demonstrate to patients by a system of reasoning, that nervous conditions depend largely upon a particular state of mind, which must be treated and disciplined before a cure can be effected. After once persuading sufferers that their nervous system is out of

order, it is extremely difficult to convince them that a cure depends upon their own efforts, for, their vanity being awakened, they become interesting to themselves, regret that they are no longer pathological subjects, and evince no desire to become responsible for their actions. This phenomenon is strange, but very real. We feel humiliated if the malady is disfiguring and repugnant, and if it interferes with our pleasures; but where vanity and pleasure are not involved, certain people experience proud satisfaction in talking of their ailments. The character in Dickens who was so immensely proud of his wife's frail health is, like all caricatures, only an exaggeration of a truth.

Nervousness has not created the faults with which from all times men have made each other suffer, but it has aggravated them, has furnished a pretext to indulge them unblushingly, and, at the same time, has diminished the qualities of endurance. Hence has arisen a general feeling of discomfort. One nervous person cannot endure that another should indulge in bad temper; he revolts against unpleasant things which hitherto he has borne with patience.

A general examination of conscience on this subject is necessary, because, with marked

exceptions, every one more or less suffers and causes suffering. Such sufferings are also useless and could, in a large degree, be eliminated, if the desire not to be a maker of sorrow once really took possession of our minds, and if each one would learn the measure of his or her responsibility. The bad temper of one does not necessarily lead to the suicide of another member of a family, but it discolors existence, and is capable of accelerating the development of maladies, the germs of which may be already dormant. In many cases it hastens death. Sensitive, proud, and delicate organizations, tender hearts that beat under a brusque exterior, those who are upright and of good faith, suffer most from the discords of domestic life. They long for a center of harmony and peace, where they can seek shelter from the struggles of the outside world, and find difficulty in resigning themselves to the absence of such a center from their own fireside.

Regret, therefore, gnaws at their hearts, rendering them morose, silent and discouraged; and thus they contribute to darken the moral atmosphere of the family circle. From being victims, they become executioners. Such is the contagious nature of ill-humor. Prince Bismarck once said, that good-natured people

are always right. In any case, grumblers are always wrong. As one diseased sheep will poison the entire flock, so the influence of one bad-tempered person will affect all around him like a train of gunpowder. At the moment every one may be laughing; the malcontent then enters, and in an instant smiles give place to frowns.

These disastrous effects manifest themselves with especial force in the family circle, where less restraint and more affection exist; and hence, where there is more sensitiveness in regard to disagreeable and unamiable behavior. It is the old story of the drop of water that finally wore away the rock. A disagreeable attitude taken by an acquaintance in society may offend, but need not give pain; but when coming from a mother, wife, brother or husband, it deeply wounds. Does this mean that family life exposes us to painful experiences, which we may escape in the other relations in life? This risk cannot be denied. Nevertheless, the family remains the grandest and most sacred institution in the world, and one that cannot be destroyed.

If we should try to dissolve the family, it would be formed anew at once. Its suppression would mean to deprive men of all moral

support and consolation. Hence to make the home circle a scene of unhappiness, as we do through selfishness, is to divert it from its true mission, which is to be a shelter, a school and a goal. How can we even imagine humanity to exist without the family? Men without it, would be solitary travelers wandering from one hotel to another, without duties or responsibilities, tasting only the pleasures of some passing illicit intercourse. From such intercourse would be born perhaps another lonely creature, eventually confided to the care of the State, and later on thrown into the struggle of life—a foundling perhaps, or an unfortunate without memories of a past, and with no hope for the future.

Neither the brutal and violent, nor the wicked, are always those who most embitter family life. Unjust and false characters—the one vice or blemish is seldom found without the other—cause the greatest suffering, and the wrong they do is more subtle and dangerous. This statement may seem a paradox, but in reality it is not. The former class are seldom loved, or they cease promptly to be so; their acts are only exterior in their effects; they strike with their fists, and they can be struck in return, and the bruise of both soon heals.

But the latter class administers the slow poison that finally kills. Certain natures suffer little from injustice and insincerity in their surroundings; nothing affects them so long as their personal interests and pleasures are not interfered with; but for truthful and sensitive souls, all contact with those two destructive forces—injustice and insincerity—represents a torture that not only exasperates, but humiliates.

I have been accused of being too severe on women, and certain passages in my book, entitled “*Ames Dormantes*” have given offense to those, who, conscious of their own merits, find my reflections out of place. Others, on the contrary, admirable and faithful souls, who exhibit a touching humility, reproach me for not having said enough about the shortcomings of women. I fear I shall again awaken the susceptibilities of the former in daring to affirm that, from the point of view of injustice, women can give odds to the opposite sex.

It is especially in the family that the lack of fair dealing is manifested. A man, having many exterior fields of action and development, delights sometimes to play the rôle of the just judge in his own home. The mother, wife or sister seldom displays these pretensions. It

offends a man to say he is unjust, but the accusation in no way disconcerts a woman. She smiles, sometimes even acquiesces. Scruples do not restrain her in her blind affections and her false estimates of men and things, for she considers it one of the privileges of her sex not to bother herself about the justice of things.

True, christian women, and superior intellectual women do not fall into this base error. They think themselves worthy of aspiring to be just, and an accusation to the contrary would wound them as deeply as it would wound a man. But few live on the heights, and, in order to bring about a change in the psychological condition of humanity, certain moral habits, must be established on a common ground, and this can never be achieved without the influence of public opinion, which in its turn must be reformed on a new basis. When injustice directly touches us and betrays our interests, we revolt and feel outraged, but it is not the finer part of us alone that is attacked. Other elements enter into play, and the feelings that agitate us are so impregnated with anger and personal hatred, that the wounds of injustice are less keenly felt. It is only when acts, words and unjust thoughts are directed against another, that we experi-

ence in all its intensity this special kind of suffering, so intolerable to the upright and honest. The most iniquitous of all is injustice to children, for they cannot resent it, and do not even understand what it is that makes them suffer; but one sees in their eyes a look of distress, surprise, and heart anguish.

The effect of injustice on youth is less moving, but more dangerous, for it embitters, hardens and often depraves the soul. It prematurely estranges from the family those who still have need of a guiding hand, and implants in the young mind germs of defiance and hatred that can never be entirely eradicated. A son or a daughter who sees one parent a victim to the injustice of the other, is much more impressed by this than by graver faults more easily concealed, and that wound less deeply. If one could speak openly of one's wrongs to the unjust being who is responsible for them, the burden would be immeasurably lightened; but this we cannot do, for the reason that often the wrong is being done unconsciously, and nearly always because the offender is not true, either to himself or to others.

Deceit is nearly always the companion of injustice; they march in pairs, one leaning upon the other, and in the family where their in-

fluence is most felt, these two perverse sisters sadden and disfigure all social relations. Deceit is subtle, insinuating itself everywhere, even in love, and often in friendship. Social relations are saturated with it, and in public life it attains gigantic proportions. The play between parties in Parliament is founded, in a large measure, upon deception and insincerity. The necessity for disapproving of all noble initiative in the opposing camp, and of blindly sanctioning the follies of one's own party, tends to foster a habit of lying to oneself. Upright men struggle against this political slavery, but from the point of view of the representative system, any measures for moral emancipation are disapproved of. On certain questions to-day the House is divided. Independent characters are refusing to vote against motions that are good and just, simply because presented by their adversaries. These symptoms should indicate a more promising future, when men, instead of enrolling themselves under a particular banner representing certain interests, shall wear the yoke of freely accepted principles, the sole object of which is the general good. We are yet far from this sincerity of soul. In what human relationship does not insincerity and deception reign?

People seem to have but one idea: To deceive each other. From the statesman who dazzles his country with promises he never means to keep, to the tradesman who falsifies and adulterates his goods, and the workman who wastes his time in order to prolong the hours of pay, bad faith and deceit are to be found on every rung of the social ladder, and we all know this. Some people protest; others smile; but so long as only material interests are injured, and this evil is manifested in public life alone, and in exterior things, we accept the position with only vague regrets. Should deceit penetrate into our sentimental relations in life, then, like injustice, it strikes a killing blow, for it stirs revolt within our most inner being.

To be deceived by a person one trusts and loves, even if there be no question of romantic passion, is more painful to us than a direct insult or a brutal act. It is sad not to be able to rely on the devotion of a brother, a sister or a friend; but to doubt their sincerity is sadder still. Hearts swell almost to bursting with indignation, but cannot find relief in reproaches as in the case of any tangible wrong; insincerity being of a nature to injure and exasperate without assuming the responsibility for any consequent suffering. Many people

who would resent it if one doubted their honor, permit themselves to say most wounding and unjust things to those with whom they live, things that make a heart bleed. Should their victims retaliate, they play "surprise," finding their anger incomprehensible, or they have nothing to reproach themselves with, yet their lips are still warm from the cutting words that they have spoken. Is it that they are wanting in intelligence, or can it be bad faith?

Other individuals have a habit in discussion of never listening to their opponents' argument, returning always to their own starting point in order to defend their selfishness, imposing sacrifices upon others, or reproaching them for wrongs never committed. No proof or argument can persuade these people; they are incapable of reasoning correctly and justly; at least they never take any heed, and after hours of discussion they will again bring forward their first argument, notwithstanding that its fallacy has been fully exposed. These same people always forget what has been done, and only remember what others have forgotten to do for them, and if one lowers oneself by recalling past sacrifices and devotion given, they become refractory, accuse one of reproaching them with favors received, and de-

clare that in reality they had no need of assistance.

All false natures are ungrateful, and ingratitude, joined to dishonesty and injustice, has such an effect upon sensitive natures, that the majority of diseases of the heart and liver that carry people off suddenly, have been slowly prepared by sadness and bitterness; the natural revolt against painful contact, imposed upon loyal and tender natures.

Women in general—women of heart and intelligence always excepted—have a habit of abusing their husbands as husbands. No doubt, in many instances the husbands merit it, but there are some, however, devoted and good, who wear themselves out endeavoring to keep peace in the family, and who are slowly killed by the ingratitude, the injustice and deceit of their wives. Such a wife, for example, may perhaps be a very virtuous woman who has never failed in her duty, and yet she is always complaining; never pausing to think what has been done for her, for she is capricious and in a state of constant irritability.

The unfortunate husband is never greeted by a kind word in his home, and never hears any just reasoning. Should he be weak and without principle, he seeks his pleasures elsewhere,

but if he be honest and affectionate he resigns himself to his misery, which eats into his being, and from this gnawing inner grief results the illness that ends his life.

In fashionable life, and in the houses of the rich, where the obligations of wealth lead one inevitably away from domestic life, these moral miseries are felt less keenly, because husband and wife depend less upon one another. With people of modest means and in the working classes, a man must find in his family, be he father, husband, son or brother, a shelter from the struggles and trials of the day; a refuge where he can rest and gather strength for the morrow, free from injustice, dishonesty and ingratitude — free, that is, from the enemies he is on the lookout for every instant of his life in the outside world.

There are, without doubt, husbands, fathers and sons who are brutal, unjust, dishonest and ungrateful—especially ungrateful—but in general, men's faults take another form; they kill in quite another way, and their shortcomings are more apparent, coarser and more tangible. Hence it is impossible for them to plead unconscious wrong-doing. Thus one sees men ruin their families through their vices, their imprudence or their weaknesses, but at least

they are responsible for these catastrophes since the administration of the family fortune is in their hands. How many times the luxurious wife renders impossible reforms which the head of the family would like to make, by refusing to deprive herself of jewels, expensive toilets, or otherwise 'o practice economy.

Criminal statistics prove that the proportion of husbands who resort to violent measures for getting rid of their mates is far greater than among wives; but in cases of poisoning, women take the lead; and it is much the same regarding those wrongs, which, without being absolutely criminal, lead often to the death of some member of a family.

The evil done by women is more subtle; one neither sees nor feels it; nor does public opinion touch it, and should the law attempt to ferret it out, it eludes its grasp. Men revenge themselves in other ways, for they are makers of sorrow as well as, and even more so, than women. Thus, in affairs of the heart, they are more criminally responsible for the sorrow they cause, and also for other sufferings. The evil wrought by their faults and their crimes, are in nearly all cases positive realities, tangible and visible, for which they must render an account.

Their injustice and dishonesty, clothed in aggressive and brutal forms, is often more in evidence in public than in private life, while the woman who is deprived of this resource, finds her field of action within the intimacy of her home circle. If the perfidious way of making others suffer, in which certain human beings excel, excites indignation because of the painful discouragement and sorrow that follow, deep sadness accompanies such indignation, for these same human beings have often very affectionate hearts, and love those whom they torture; they would like to be good, to fulfill their duties, and are sometimes—not always—quite ignorant of the sufferings they cause.

In the present existence, or in any that may follow, when these men and women shall have developed consciousness, and educated their reason, a terrible awakening will come to them, for the words, “too late” are the saddest in any language—too late to be happy themselves, too late to give happiness to those whom they love, too late to repair the ravages they are responsible for, too late, alas, to begin life again.

III

EQUALITY

“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”—*St. Paul.*

In the front ranks of makers of sorrow must be placed those generous minded, yet foolish, utopians who have demoralized humanity with the catch-word “Equality.” This attractive word satisfies that craving for justice which torments the modern conscience. Never, however, has a word contributed more to destroy peace of mind by awakening aspirations that can never be realized. A part of the unrest that troubles society to-day proceeds directly from this idea, for, giving men equality as an end to attain, is to send them in pursuit of a chimera that will ever elude their grasp. And, on what is it based; this hope of equality that is now upheaving the masses? Whichever way we may look, inequality reigns supreme—in the works of Nature, in the human form, and in the infinite psychological differences between individuals. From the beginning, under no form whatsoever, has equality

existed in the world; a proof that it is opposed by immutable laws. The various creeds have so clearly understood this that they have never taught equality, even with regard to the position of the Creature towards the Creator.

Even Christianity, that proclaims all men the children of God, absolutely contradicts the principle of equality by the doctrine "many are called, but few are chosen." Speaking of Western religions only, it must follow from the teachings of the Old and New Testaments, that the Eternal has not the same intentions towards every one. He employs very diverse measures, electing some for salvation and electing others for perdition. The potter employs different clays in the formation of different vessels, and this right no one dares contest. The words of St. Paul on this subject are clear and explicit. God calls whom He wishes and rejects whom He will, but nevertheless, all are His children, and all are equal before His love and His justice. In this resides the mystery that can only be solved by a thorough understanding of the need for solidarity. The head has need of the arms, and the arms of the head, and this mutual need creates a sort of equality between all the members of a body; but inequality of position and talents will remain until the end of

time, and perhaps even in the world beyond.

The ancient founders of states and our different civilizations, inspired by the inequalities visible in Nature, established their rules on such a base of tyranny, abuse, and crying injustice, that at last the heart of man revolted. The comparatively recent declaration of the equality of all men before the law, proceeds from this outburst of indignation, so strong in some races that it has created irresistible currents of thought, and imposed upon legislation certain principles founded upon equity.

We are only now on the threshold of the path we must follow; great reforms are yet to be accomplished, and it is clearly each one's duty to work, even at the price of personal sacrifices, to further the cause of justice. The outlook promises humanity a better future, when demands will be less bitter because less justified; when the promptings of jealousy will be weakened, and when, if conflicts arise, the combatants will feel that, "*des Juges à Berlin*"* still exist, and that we are all dealing

* A mill called "*Sans Souci*," once belonged to a happy miller of Potsdam. Frederick the Great, wishing one day to enlarge his domain, offered to buy the mill. The miller refused to sell. The King then threatened to take it. The miller, holding his ground, replied to the King's threat, that he did not fear him, as there were honest judges in Berlin.

with an honest and intelligent public whose opinions are based on moral law. This day is yet far distant, even though to some its dawn seems approaching; but whether the desired results be attained in long or short periods, they represent the only victory against inequality to which man can lay claim.

The mirage of equality in worldly conditions when flashed before the masses, becomes as deceptive as the falsest chimera with which humanity has ever been deluded. Men might as well promise to exempt a man from death. A physician who would lure his clients with similar hopes, would be pronounced a charlatan, an ignoramus or a fool. The prophets who foretell a future society in which the members shall possess equal advantages, prepare bitter disappointment for their trusting followers. In any case, they are developing in souls an incurable discontent, and an ever increasing irritation, which, instead of augmenting a sentiment of brotherly love, strangles it at birth.

It may be objected that I preach to the converted; that the most ignorant are aware of the inequalities of Nature, and know that no two leaves on the same tree are exactly alike. The modern apostle claims that his dream is

not to modify the laws of creation,—whose first cause is unknown,—but to transform a society that was constituted by men; to break down barriers men have erected, and to give to every one his share in the good things of life; in other words, an ideal state where every one has a place at the banquet.

While it is true that our faces, figures and physical vigor, even our mental gifts, are diverse; for all that, the agitators for a future social organization, undertake to give to all an equal position and start in life, as if a position and good start in life did not depend upon the kind of face, figure, physical strength and intellectual gifts allotted to one by the great Distributor,—or by whatever other name one elects to call Him,—and allotted to every one according to His good pleasure. But no reasoning can prevail, for the word equality seems to have misled the greatest minds, infatuated as with a false divinity. Joseph Mazzini, in spite of his great intellectual gifts, persisted in inscribing Equality on the banners of young Italy, trusting to this misleading word to galvanize the masses, although, in all good faith, he saw neither its emptiness nor its absurdity. The Universe in all its manifestations proclaims “inequality,” and man, that

broken reed, after the example of Paschal, dares to cry back "equality."

There is in this impracticable aspiration something puerile, and overwhelmingly sad. When we hear people (whose ignorance alone guarantees their sincerity) explaining certain convictions, we are moved to compassion, and long to warn such hearts, elated with false hope, against the inevitable deception, and to show them practical perspectives; for hope constantly betrayed corrodes and poisons the soul. Even admitting the possibility of constituting by legislature a state of things where children at birth would become proprietors of an equal amount of land, and would each be entitled to the same training and instruction; this arrangement could not, of itself, establish equality, not only because Providence always remains the master, and no human power can constrain it to make an equal distribution of favors, but also because no law, even when enforced by violence, can prevent certain men from being born to command and others to obey, in all classes of society. The same hygiene, the same physical exercise, the same food, might perhaps somewhat diminish the exterior differences—and yet is this ever really possible? Intelligence, character, feelings—

nothing can bring these up to the same level. And this is not only a question of difference of education, but of heredity.

Take two brothers, brought up in exactly the same way, and the results may be diametrically opposite. One will understand everything in life; the other, nothing. They must of necessity occupy different positions in society; one controlling the minds and wills of men, the other carried along by the general current. Here is an example of equality made impossible in circumstances where it appeared to be established by nature. What will the results not be in cases where early beginnings, the influence of surroundings and the imprint of atavism, are in absolute opposition? Besides birth, fortune, intelligence and character, many secret forces differentiate one man from another, and even if it were possible to bring everything else up to one level, in the above advantages men must ever remain unequal. Each individual possesses in himself special powers, the essence of which no one has penetrated, and which it is as difficult to determine as it is to regulate their effects.

Why has a particular officer, a notable captain of industry, or a certain head master, such power over his soldiers, his workmen and his

pupils? Why is another who, may perhaps be gifted with superior qualities, never either listened to or obeyed? Modern psychology has not yet discovered by what mysterious forces certain personalities dominate others, inspire action in others, and attract souls as the flame does the moth. Against this magnetism which gives power, inspires love and influences opinion, no levelling force will ever prevail. It is the closed door to which all entrance is forbidden.

To the poorer classes and to those in the long list of failures, so numerous to-day, it is natural that the word equality should have a magic sound, for it seems the one remedy for just needs, and unjust sufferings. But after having distilled its poison into the hearts of the ignorant and unhappy, for whom it is synonymous with revenge, the idea of equality penetrates humanity at large, and the privileged class, the fortunate and the happy, seek through it the right to rebel against all authority. Those whose lives lie in pleasant places find in equality a pretext for constant discontent, depression and bad humor. The cry that one hears is not only from the suffering and the persecuted; it is the wail of insatiate vanity from those struggling to the front, who resent

not being pushed forward by the force of public opinion.

These four syllables — equality — which in the mouth of a leader of men, excite populations to riots, strikes and revolutions, produce in the private life of a citizen* disorders equally dangerous.

The decline of respect in children for their parents is one direct result; some attribute this to the development of individualism, the result of modern education; but does it not rather prove that they have lost all sense of proportion and have forgotten even its value. Only superior beings in these days yield to authority. The mediocre refuse, from the schoolboy, who imagines himself upon the same intellectual level as his father or professor, to the neopolitician who regards the leading statesmen of his country as idiots, or to the young raw lieutenant, who calls his general an "old block-head."

This pretended superiority does not prevent men who consider that they demean themselves by submitting to the power of their superiors, from seeking with avidity those in high places, in order to solicit favors within their gift.

*See "Ames Dormantes."

Neither admiration nor sincere respect play any part in their efforts to bask in the sunshine of greatness; they believe themselves to be the equal of any one—and this sentiment, far from developing dignity of soul, urges them on to moral abasement. They feign humility in order to further their personal interests, wearing its mask with rage in their hearts.

Why he and not me? they ask themselves. These words are written to-day in almost every heart. The ingenuous cry them from the house-tops, and there is something inexpressibly sad in the silly pronouncements of incapable people who think themselves fit to govern the world, to produce a masterpiece, or to discover the hidden forces of Nature.

If the judgments that men pass on one another were known, two-thirds of the ties of friendship and blood would be severed,—those rare souls who respect the affections, alone excepted. These malicious estimates, are they the result of envy, wickedness, or calumny? Sometimes; but in general they are born in hearts poisoned with the venom of equality. That others should reach heights they cannot attain, is to them intolerable. Their ambition is always to surpass, and, in default of other

means, they, by sneers and detraction, drag down those above them.

A celebrated actress once said of another, "She is a finished comedienne; nothing is lacking in her but art." This subtle and ill-natured praise wounded her rival's most sensitive point, that is to say, the "raison d'être" of her life, and it is just at that point that apostles of equality always aim. They would not say of a learned man, he is ignorant of literature and philosophy, but that his science is superficial and incomplete. If a politician is in question, or a psychologist, or a historian, they will attack his general knowledge. Women do not viciously attack bad qualities in other women, but, they minimize their virtues, or their superior talents, especially those to which they owe their power and to obtain which, they made the greatest sacrifices. The desire for equality excites this iconoclasm, wherein often real malice plays no part. The discontent that embitters so many lives has its source in the silly notion that one must obtain what another possesses. Those tainted with this disease, for it is a malady of the mind, do not admit it, even to themselves; but they are always conscious of their condition; and one has

only to observe them closely to be convinced of this fact.

The number of people discontented with their lot is immense. Here I speak only of the controlling classes. Every one has tastes above his or her condition, and when conditions improve, appetites increase, but discontent remains. Very rich people, or those who enjoy exalted rank or high social position, are as a rule immune from the microbe of equality. Independent spirits, the recluse, the philosopher and the sage know it not, and smile when they perceive it in their neighbors. Honest, good, simple natures ignore it completely. It is the mediocre that are attacked with the disorder, their low level being fruitful ground for the cultivation of the bacilli. This rage for equality at once creates makers of sorrow. In their families and immediate surroundings, bad humor, resulting from unsatisfied ambition, renders them insupportable, irascible and unjust.

The doctrine of equality has struck a blow at self-criticism. A sense of just proportions is lost, and men abrogate to themselves the right to decide questions about which they know nothing. Without a right sense of the fitness of things, or a just perception of the scale of values, tact, that subtle gift that softens

angles and renders social intercourse agreeable, necessarily diminishes. The most unflattering epithets are applied by the least competent critics, not only to literature (literature purporting to be the image of life—every one of us thinks himself or herself a competent judge of it), but also to painting, music and even science. The latter, especially medicine, interests women extremely. That is as it should be, for having charge of children, women should know the rules of hygiene, and in the absence of a physician be capable of applying certain urgent remedies. But to hear them laying down the law on methods of cure and often incautiously applying to celebrated practitioners such epithets as idiot and charlatan, invites ridicule.

What is the hidden source of this singular audacity? It is the desire for equality. Having learned the names of several remedies in vogue, and the new application of therapeutics, women imagine themselves as competent as men who have consecrated their lives to medical study and research. And it is much the same in all branches of human knowledge. Men, like women, delight to pronounce judgment upon things of which they know nothing and the majority are unconscious of the in-

instinct that urges them on to expose their ignorance. They obey not only the snare of instinct when guided by their natural impulses, but also the false doctrine of equality. To be silent or to interrogate, is this not tantamount to confessing to the one who speaks, that you recognize in him a capacity you yourself do not possess? Clever people do not fall into this error. If intelligent people exist without number—superior people, capable of self-criticism, are rare.

It is not possible to know, or sound the depths of every subject, but it is indispensable to have "*dés clartés de tout*,"* to be interested in arguments and discussions and even to take part in them. But between expressing an opinion, and giving a categorical decision, between appreciation and dogmatic pronouncements, there is the distance that separates a spring zephyr from a hurricane.

It is not unusual to see quite ordinary people, in the presence of a man whose authority is recognized in certain branches of knowledge, square themselves as much as to say "you pass for a learned man, a great artist, a great statesman, but remember in spite of all that,

* Molière.

I consider myself your equal.” The words are not spoken, but they are expressed in the look and attitude. “Presumptuous idiots,” one exclaims. Yes, presumptuous idiots. And the doctrine of equality tends in an appalling manner to increase their number.

This kind of feeling weighs down and sours social intercourse; it penetrates family life and disintegrates it. The members of a family are not all gifted alike with the same faculties—or the same talents; and the one who rises above his brethren by the beauty and force of his intellect, rarely flatters the “amour propre” of his relations. On the contrary, their “amour propre” rebels against this superiority, be it real, or only apparent,—and with malice aforethought all conspire toward his undoing. Thus he becomes the most wretched member of the home circle, for against his vanity are arrayed in revolt his acts, his words, and his personality which are subjects of silent and constant criticism. Without the doctrine of equality, any family would be happy and proud to recognize the charm or celebrity of one of its members, and mutual satisfaction would be assured. As it is, we see only rebellious souls. The life of the brother who has achieved, is poisoned by the hostility surrounding him, and the hearts

of his nearest are consumed by bitterness. These sufferings engender others, and the aggregate, for one and all, is a burden weighing humanity down under a depressing load.

Another regrettable effect of the doctrine of equality is the destruction of originality. In his desire to resemble others, man has destroyed within himself that which differentiates him from his kind. He has followed the same fashions, the same habits of life, has always felt himself bound to indulge in the same pleasures, and this tendency which existed, even in Rabelais' time—and Rabelais had ancestors—is to-day greatly accentuated. Original people are on the decrease.

There is only one idea extant—to copy the manners and habits of others, and naturally those of men and women on the higher rungs of the social ladder. Parents are uneasy from the moment they discover any marked tastes in their children; a young girl who likes neither society nor fashion is looked upon as a “*rara avis*.” Her mother becomes alarmed; insists that girls should be made to cultivate these things in order to avoid being singular and unlike other girls. And those who know by experience where the development of such tastes leads in the future, wish, nevertheless, to find

them inborn and to nurture them in their children. Whence comes this illogical feeling, if not from the spirit of equality that confuses judgment and reason.

One sees intelligent, right-minded, and honest mothers resigning themselves in advance to all the follies their sons may commit, as an unfortunate toll that must be paid to the similarity that exists among all men. This is a capital error: all men are not alike; instinct in some cases distinguishes them one from another, and more often the means used in regulating or repressing them. There is nothing so unsympathetic and so ridiculous as false originality, seeking to make itself distinguished through other people; but when one is really gifted with particular tastes and ways of thinking, why not follow the line of least resistance? The desire to be one among a troop is foolish and absurd. If the fashion is set by a personage sufficiently important to make that fashion "the thing," masses of people will fall into line, even though this particular fashion may not be to their liking. For this reason we so quickly tire of everything. Those who lend themselves to this folly of imitation, are responsible for disastrous results. The upper and intellectual classes do not always resist

this tendency to imitate, which has for its accomplices all that is cowardly and idle in man. Their duty should be, on the contrary, to combat it energetically, since imitation diminishes individual prestige and renders life monotonous.

If the idea of equality had not smothered the germs of originality latent in souls, our enlarged view of things, and the greater amount of independence now enjoyed by every one, with the opening of a new century, should have brought to light an infinite number of interesting personalities. But the fever of imitation has penetrated the hearts of the majority, and has even stifled in some persons, gifts that would have proved useful to them; such is the need of conforming ourselves to this general and captivating folly.

The world offers a striking image of this state of mind. Women of wealth and fashion and the little tradesman's wife are dressed alike; they have an identical style of dress, wrap and hat, with only this difference,—what is elegant in the former is ordinary in the latter, because of inferior cut and material, and the air with which the costume is worn. If the tradesman's wife of modest fortune had enough imagination and originality to adopt a costume

adapted to her station, and in keeping with her means, she would be more attractive, would spend less money, and would not look like a bad copy. But her middle-class mind does not work on these lines, and hence she, in turn, serves as model to the working girl who imitates her hats and dresses.

It is related that a celebrated French painter of the nineteenth century made his wife's ball dresses. He draped on her the material, the gauze, ribbons and flowers all being held together by pins. The style was the invention of the moment. The effect was marvelous, the toilettes of Madam ——— became justly celebrated. What woman of to-day would lend herself to this originality? The idea of not resembling others, or of not being sufficiently "banal," fills her with terror.

As with toilettes, so it is with certain faults. One must have them. If anyone attempts to correct them, he or she is thought to be unnatural. The world is more exacting as to faults than as to good qualities. It will not permit one to filch away faults which one is accustomed to encounter. With the passing of the years, when we cease to occupy the attention of the world, we are allowed to lead our lives apart. In general, with age we lose all

spontaneity, and resemble coin that has been too long in circulation. Unless he be a recluse or indifferent to public opinion, a man up to 45 or 50 years of age is expected to stand for certain things; manifest certain passions and practise certain vices. Should he refrain from these, he is considered a hypocrite with a poor nature. In any case, not to identify oneself with the conditions and people of one's own age, seems abnormal. It puts one out of touch with society, which always provokes criticism.

Uniformity in everything has been characteristic of the beginning of this century. Every one, both men and women, wears the hair in the same fashion, dress alike, furnish their houses in the same style, go in for the same sports and use the same slang. In bearing, in walk, and in gesture, an implacable fashion rules their movements. Look at young girls passing in the street; they could be compared to so many dolls turned out of the same workshop. Maternity and experience put shades of difference into this condition of monotony, but before the period of love or marriage, it reigns supreme. Those who preserve their originality, and who walk and carry themselves as nature and their own vision of the beautiful direct, are the intelligent, and they

are also the exceptions. The larger portion of humanity evinces a deplorable lack of imagination and persistently poses, not to be esthetic, but to be uniformly correct. Variety is a beauty in itself, but whenever the will of man has the power to achieve it, it is promptly suppressed. Nature, with a superior intelligence, never repeats the same features, be they beautiful or ugly. Why do we not imitate her, instead of disfiguring beautiful things by inferior and insipid copies? There are, I believe, people who would make the sexes identical, were that possible.

We cannot deny that "woman's rights" opens a grave question of social economy and human dignity; but when carried to excess, what is responsible for the craze, if not this idea of equality? Woman's rights has made many converts and will yet have even greater triumphs, provided uniformity between the sexes is not attempted. Man's work is to struggle against nature, to make her serve his needs, not to destroy fundamental laws. There is a divine plan, or natural order, in the very things man tries to overthrow, and all persistent effort in this field will only defeat his own ends.

If women would not blind themselves with illusions of equality, they would obtain by the side of men a place of considerable importance, a more complete feminine education would become general, and the means of gaining honorable livelihoods would multiply. If, however, she holds to the chimera of equality with men, the result will be many painful surprises. That there are superior women and ordinary men cannot be denied, but an excess of intelligence on the one side, and absence of it on the other, does not suffice to establish equality.

Oh! "Equality," this unfortunate word which can never in any sense be practically applied, and that warps the judgment and the heart. Take the ordinary example of the sovereign and the peasant. Naturally the daughter of the soil would never dream of being the equal to her queen, and yet if the rustic maid is beautiful and the queen ugly, it is the latter who, on this special point, is the inferior of the two. The most obscure professor, if he has genius, can refuse to recognize as his equal the richest man in the realm, and so it is with the well brought up man and the "tough." The "tough," by the strength of his muscles has the advantage in a fight, and such inequal-

ity is at once established to his profit. And so on indefinitely.

This word, fatal to the peace of the world, should be erased from every language and find a resting place only in the law. But, some will object, that without a longing for that equality which torments mankind, progress could not be accomplished; it is this longing that urges men on to conquest. Are we quite sure of this? And do we not rather owe progress, as Pasteur said, to the disinterested labors of the intellect? Even from the social point of view, we must not confound a just and healthy normal desire for the amelioration of the masses, with a chimeric desire for an identical position for all. As to the question of legal reforms, the most elementary sentiments of justice should suffice equally to modify legislation. For indispensable reforms on this point, it is upon justice alone that we must count. This demand for equality, if we examine it closely, is far removed from the true spirit of justice, for equality is likely to see things only from one point of view. Man demands to be the equal of his superior, hardly ever of his inferior, which alone reduces the aspirations of equality to a desire to ascend and attain moral and material conditions superior to his own; legiti-

mate aspirations become pernicious, if disguised under false names.

Justice and fraternity, these two terms, should be in the social catechism of modern man! they alone are capable of calming the Soul and establishing between human beings relations that are not sources of mutual suffering. They contain the elements that ameliorate the life of the individual and society at large. The search for equality, on the contrary, must ever be a futile error, a great and inevitable deception, darkening the destiny of man and embittering his heart. Without dividing human values into four categories, as Count de Gobineau, the French predecessor of Nietzsche, has done — superior beings, idiots, eccentrics and brutes—it is certain that this earth produces sometimes Elect Souls possessing, to quote Carlyle, “The divine idea of the world,” and who should never be confounded with the great mass of mediocrities.

Our only possible equality consists in that we have need of each other, for every human being has his or her definite function in the great plan of the universe. This fact is not always understood, but if we could fully realize it, the relations between men would be wonderfully sweetened. Those rare souls, who

once convinced, strive to conform their actions to this truth, live in an atmosphere of justice and fraternity, and all who approach them enjoy the sunshine of their presence. Our great aim should be, to be conscious of our thoughts and actions, for to act unconsciously is to walk in darkness, and by a way that sometimes leads to crime.

IV

THE SOUL'S BLEMISHES

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”—*Proverbs*.

Little blemishes on the soul are responsible for a great part of the miseries men inflict upon one another. The majority never even suspect their existence, and if their actions were traced back to the causes that produced them, they would be horrified to find in their hearts these noxious growths.

This ignorance of the inner life, the true field of men's activities, renders the cure of moral maladies very difficult. What in the beginning is only a tendency easily controlled, becomes at once an incurable infection. The first duty of every human being who reflects is to learn the true motives for his feelings and actions.* At the present moment, this subjective study is absolutely neglected.

Except in some great crisis, a man lives automatically, feeling and acting without recognizing influences, or knowing what is urging

* See chapter on “Equality.”

him into one current rather than another. When his interests become involved he becomes shrewd, but in that case he makes an intellectual, and not a moral effort. Would he only accustom himself to minute self-examination, his heart would become a well tended garden, in which weeds and rank growths are sedulously uprooted.

We are conscious of our heart by its contractions of pleasure or of pain, but we treat it like a neglected room defaced by dust, insects and cobwebs, where the good housewife never comes to restore order. Examination of conscience has never been generally practised, sloth of soul and will, being ever in opposition. We practise self-examination only at certain times of the year, and cease to think of it immediately afterwards.

In the hurry of modern life no one finds time to make a retreat; hence, we must return to the system of Pythagoras and make it a habit to review every night the events of the past day, just as regularly as we take our morning bath. But at night one is usually so fatigued that the descent into the soul is short and superficial. The only practical way of knowing what passes within us would be to question ourselves upon every word and action. We

are careful to look before we step, and this we do without any fatigue. Then why not practise in the moral order, the same prudence that in the physical order enables us to accomplish this action with so much facility.

But to understand the necessity for self-examination we must recognize its importance. Those who consider it an artificial procedure, a heritage from antecedent generations, that future generations will know nothing about, shrug their shoulders at the idea of making it a daily practise. Those who deny the efficacy of self-examination because it no longer moves them, had better close this book, which holds no interest save for souls to whom the existence of an inner voice that approves or condemns, is a living reality. This voice, that condemns blind instincts, is it a breath of the spirit, or a substance finer than animal matter? Shall we ever know? In any case this organ or breath produces varied phenomena: to some it never speaks at all, others hush its voice each time it makes itself heard, strangling it as Othello did Desdemona. With others, conscience sleeps, or suddenly awakens in a way no one can explain. They who live in constant communion with their consciences are exceptional men and women who control and direct

their own lives, and exercise a salutary influence upon the lives of others.

Makers of sorrow are not recruited from their ranks: these superior souls stand alone. The good, the generous, those who love virtue and detest vice, are not included in this class either, for we only arrive at that state of perfection at the cost of much effort, and by constant and patient attention. But without falling into excessive scruples that obscure the spirit and uselessly torture the heart, we must reflect upon the effects of our words and actions.

Let us not forget that everything in this world is of greater importance than man's limited mind can conceive, and could we but perfectly realize this, our inner and social life would be differently ordered.

Vanity, envy, jealousy and impatience are, with their derivatives, the little blemishes on otherwise upright souls. There exist people intentionally unjust, criminal, vicious, wicked and dishonest, and these no human reasoning can influence. Nothing but divine intervention could arouse them—such as the miracle on the road to Damascus that struck St. Paul to the earth. The four blemishes on the soul just

enumerated are generally united one to the other, like affectionate sisters; but differences of character cause one to prevail over the other, and they are rarely found of the same size or in the same proportion.

Vanity will sometimes reign alone if the mind be not intelligent and lacks the spirit of criticism. Every day we see men and women, wearing through life calm, satisfied and smiling countenances, lost in admiration of themselves, and certain of exciting the approbation of their neighbors. They know neither envy nor jealousy, so certain are they of occupying in the society in which they move the first place. Neither are they tormented by impatience, nor by the superiority of others, being quite oblivious, and the fever of equality is unknown to them, since they find themselves preferred to anybody else.

When a woman possesses this rooted self-satisfaction, she is spared much suffering. She is never jealous in love; her husband may deceive her, but even if warned, she does not believe, and the same phenomenon manifests itself in men. Render them the least homage and they swell with unjustifiable pride and, self-satisfied in a supreme degree, they never envy others.

But this category of men is so uninteresting, that having once observed the type, we pass on. There is a righteous pride that saves one from vanity; fatalism can do so also, while great shrewdness of intellect produces the same effect. The stoic is rarely vain. Christian souls who have conquered themselves crush out vanity, but in the masses, it lies at the base of their impulses, their words and their acts. Intuitive people, with keen perceptions, divine it, and feel at once its presence in another. This vulgar product of the heart tarnishes the most noble qualities. To find a character free from vanity is a pure joy, and one that restores confidence in human nature.

A clear line of demarcation must be traced in spite of the apparent relationship between vanity and ambition, for the latter can be noble; the former never is. An ambitious person, who does not struggle against excessive vanity, becomes, because of it, capable of the lowest thoughts and meanest actions, and thus is necessarily a maker of sorrow, for vanity is relentless. Vanity indicates, however, weakness, not strength, and the suffering caused by brute force is not so cruel and is less dangerous. There are women—the havoc caused by masculine vanity shows itself generally in other

forms—outwardly irreproachable, morally correct, capable even of kind acts, and consequently convinced of their right to have respect, who, nevertheless, cause more sorrow by their vanity and jealousy, than openly immoral women, notwithstanding the publicity given to the faults of such, for they are free from vanity and jealousy.

The jealousy of which I speak is not jealousy of the heart. It is born of an avidity for praise, a feeling that revolts against another's successes, and creates an irresistible desire to belittle another. The radiance of another's countenance irritates jealous and vain people who are carried away and dominated by a blind desire to tarnish this aureole. Jealousy does not ask itself what will be the result of treacherous words and insinuating maneuvers; it thinks only of the momentary satisfaction of bringing down from their pedestals, or at least several rungs of the ladder, those persons whose superiority in some particular line has offended it. This stepping down can be most disastrous for the persons in question, but what of that; or, rather, who cares?

The habit of consulting the conscience has been perforce abandoned by the vain, for if they once interrogated their own motives, they

could not live with themselves. When they do sound themselves it is always upon other points; they open only certain doors and padlock the others. This pitiful ruse is unconsciously resorted to by the majority of mankind, for to listen to the voice of the interior judge is very annoying at certain times in life. There are moments when we close the right ear, that we may hear only with the left; this, however, is often only the cowardice of the moment; but with the vain it becomes a fixed habit.

This evil is like gangrene that poisons the blood and causes death, and yet it does not produce that intense suffering which generally indicates the seat of a malady and the progress of a disease. In spite of this chronic sluggishness of conscience, these makers of sorrow are the first victims of their evil thoughts. Unless they are fools, they are never satisfied with their social advantages, and to see others possess what they do not, becomes a thorn in their flesh. If Dante lived to-day he would add another circle to his hell—the circle of insatiable vanity never satisfied.

The vain and the jealous diffuse a poison around them, and destroy or tarnish that which flowers best in the human heart—sympathy,

friendship and esteem. Who among us has not experienced the sudden coldness, inexplicable and unjustifiable, of a friend—the grasp of the hand that has become less cordial, the tone of voice less affectionate, and words less trusting. This is like a sudden suspicion, a shadow that interposes itself, or a subtle change from we know not what of the day before. It is useless to seek for a cause of the misunderstanding, for usually it does not exist. The influence of a vain and jealous person suffices to instil disparagement and calumny into another's mind—germs that destroy affection and respect. In such cases, one cannot parry the blow, or defend oneself against shadows. A knowledge of life, a goodly portion of philosophy, and a certain stoicism of soul help one to support with equanimity these painful surprises; but less disciplined characters, and the enthusiastic and impulsive, suffer cruelly, because of the friendship that seems clouded and that they fear to lose. Loss of confidence in the faithless friend, and proof of his or her betrayal, crushes them to the earth.

Sometimes the wrong is only passing, for truth is stronger than falsehood; it triumphs over lies and suspicions, and with sudden and unexpected flashes of light dissipates the

clouds. But it is not always thus. With certain characters, once doubt has entered, it remains even in the face of convincing evidence, for the work of double dealing and calumnious insinuations often leaves behind it a never-dying echo. The charm of relationship that united two beings is broken, a sweetness is taken out of life, a tie severed that nothing can unite. Often the consequences of the rupture in the moral order are infinite and unexpected. In the material world the effects can be equally pernicious. Careers have been shattered, or interfered with, by the little vanities of a jealous heart. There are men who lose their means of livelihood because they have had the misfortune to gain a notoriety that offends the vanity of those about them. Such examples could be multiplied without end.

Jealous and vain women excel in the art of estranging friends and chilling admiration. The envy and jealousy of men attacks more concrete things. It is when having in view a place, a situation, or some gain, that they attack and betray each other; but, once the poison has entered into their hearts, they are as unscrupulous as women. Let it be understood, however, that I speak only of those with outward pretensions to honorable conduct. This

manner of injuring another's interests is natural and logical to many; even to feel themselves makers of sorrow excites their pride, for they imagine thus to acquire strength or affirm their power. The majority of the vain and jealous, be they men or women, are unconscious of any wrong-doing and if one accuses them, they are astonished, and reply: "What do you mean? So and So? But I am his friend and would render him any service. I have spoken against him? What an idea! Evidently every one has his or her own way of looking at things! Must one renounce all independence of judgment? Thus, for example,'" And once more the charge is renewed, and the disparagement begins all over again.

I am convinced that, if the majority of unfortunate men and women, led on by these vulgar passions, would examine their base motives they would not only be surprised but covered with shame and confusion. But, instead of hating them for causing so much suffering, we should pity them, for they renounce the real joys of life to live in constant unrest. Their faces, prematurely wrinkled, their mouths twisted into lines of bitterness, their sallow complexions colored by discontent, not disease,

all proclaim a state of painful interior disorder. A jealous person may have a clear complexion, it is true, but to the close observer the countenance is not illumined by an expression of serene harmony, and one only sees reflected a mediocre soul, incapable of rejoicing in another's good.

The heart of man holds within it the germs of these two sister passions. Every one of us is vain and jealous. This statement is both false and true. First, it is not just to confound vanity with pride; they are dissimilar in essence, even though apparently alike, and moreover, natures do exist that are rarely tempted by vanity or jealousy. In any case, they stifle at once their least manifestations, and treat them as conquered rivals. If we wish to be makers of joy, we should belong to this class of valiant souls, for, so long as our souls are corroded with vanity, we are incapable of creating happiness about us.

Envy is so closely allied to jealousy and vanity that it is difficult to separate them, and yet they are distinguished by many shades of differences. The envious person is usually vain and jealous, and yet it is possible to be one and not the other! Envy is sometimes strangely directed to material ends, without

any desire for power. Money is wanted simply to possess it, well-being for well-being's sake, pleasure for itself alone, and no thought of vanity enters in the desire to acquire. Natures absorbed in material joys—and who envy others inordinately, should they not possess these joys—are often quite lacking in vanity. They laugh at approbation and appearance as vain things, the tangible only having value in their eyes.

The above is apt to be the case with men. With women vanity nearly always plays its part in the envy awakened by the advantages of others, and the desire to please, to surpass, and shine, must always be counted with. Upright, simple, straightforward characters have not these defects; they are what they represent themselves to be. Hence the sum of the suffering they cause is very small.

The envious, in their desire for a monopoly that is often elusive, endeavor to destroy and diminish another's advantages by perfidious accusations that tarnish reputations, destroy the prestige of celebrities, and create about these people a dark atmosphere of depression, poisoned with ill-will and disparagement. They are incapable of rejoicing in another's happiness, and if they are sufficiently well

brought up to feign at least false satisfaction, its hollowness is apparent, and one feels that envy hides behind their smiles. The greater portion of humanity do not analyze these sentiments, but feel ill at ease without being able to explain the cause.

These three perfidious sisters, vanity, envy and jealousy, united or separated, are real destroyers of happiness and peace, and of the right direction of life. Certain persons, apparently honorable, will have, in this respect, an appalling account to render. They have prevented and spoiled so much happiness, exhausted so much good-will, cast withering doubt on so much affection, and belittled so much talent, that had they wrung the necks of one or two victims, they would have been guilty of less wrong. At least, they would have limited their ravages to a few violent deaths. Unfortunately, it is not an easy task to reform the moral code, which is limited to punishing homicides and visible and tangible thefts. Even public opinion, with fewer restraints, does not suffice to reach the guilty. So true is it that a man's worst enemies are not always those who steal his purse and brandish the knife.

All that is gay and brilliant, all that represents fortune and success, exercises an irresistible attraction, and the world rushes by instinct to whatever gives it warmth and light. With the envious this movement is automatic and involuntary, for they find it more natural to weep with the sorrowful than to rejoice with the glad. We find, however, shades of difference. Certain men and women are jealous of the world at large; others envy only their neighbors, those who occupy a position analogous to their own, sharing the same objects and following the same line in life. The worth and dignity of the end pursued does not always prevent this venomous efflorescence. The tilting ground of these unedifying struggles is often philanthropic, social and educational endeavor.

The desire to be first always, and everywhere in evidence, and to impose one's opinions, destroys the worthiest initiative. How many people lose interest in most useful research because they cannot occupy the first place, and what rancor is evinced against those who, doing good for good's sake alone, acquire weight in the community. We are often astonished to see some good work languish and die, and find upon investigation that

unconsciously it was undermined by baser feelings creeping in. Every thought of envy, hatred, or treachery, creates perverse and destructive forces, which then act independently of the will that gave them life; since thought differs in its results from action and words. A bad thought not expressed, causes greater destruction than bitter words, and especially in family life where it dries up the sources of joy and peace.

There are families where common interests are so strongly felt that the members stand together in serried ranks like soldiers, ready to throw themselves upon the enemy. Others resemble mutual admiration societies, and in others again family affection is so profound that it teaches everything that is good, sweet and salutary. But the members of a family who are devoured by jealousy and envy resemble conspirators plotting against some particular member of a community. All are agreed in blaming and criticising his or her acts and manner of living. They show jealousy of everything, see only his advantages, forget his misfortunes, and are incapable of pity. If the victim has character, intelligence and independence, it is still worse for him and the persecution increases.

There exists in the depths of every vain and jealous person, a tyrant, impatient of being surpassed. How many reserve their indulgence for the degraded and unbalanced, for, knowing their inferiority, they are conscious in their presence of a delicious feeling of superiority. Mediocre people owe their success to this feeling, which renders life difficult to individuals who have risen above the masses by their industry, talents and aspirations. Do not pity them too much, however, since perfect happiness consists in communion with the divine, and to taste this communion ever so faintly must be a great joy.

Sufferings we deliberately cause others interrupt communion with the mysterious visitor who comes from time to time to visit us, and I ask myself if the great sin that causes neither pain nor injury to any one, is not less repelling than the little sin whose object is a neighbor's undoing? It is certain that each sin has its consequences, but I believe firmly that in the divine balance, the importance of the sin in itself, will weigh less than the suffering of which it was the cause.

V

GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Take back thy friend; perhaps he has not offended, and if he has, he will not continue to do so.—*Ben Sirach*.

Grievances and complaints must be counted among the useless sufferings that darken human existence. The words in themselves are insignificant, but they represent a series of mean feelings and injurious thoughts that are most serious in their consequences. Like little gnawing worms that finally undermine a whole structure, grievances and complaints degrade the heart that gives them birth, that harbors them even for a time, or habitually entertains them. From the first moment of their appearance, they accumulate, banishing both peace and joy, and in all social relations they distil a deadly poison. Their presence is at first scarcely felt, but almost before we are conscious of it, they are masters of our hearts, and have crowded out those sweet qualities—confidence, gratitude and tenderness.

Their wicked teeth cut into the flowers of the fields, and the soil is dry and arid wherever

they pass. They cast a gloom over every affection like a swarm of insects that, at certain seasons of the year and in certain climates, suddenly darken the atmosphere. The swarm of locusts that descended upon the Egyptians is typical of a shower of grievances; for these fall upon the soul as the locusts fell upon the earth. It requires great elevation of soul always to stifle grievances and complaints, for when we least expect it, they attack the heart. No other plants grow with such rapidity; born in the morning, they are giants before night. They destroy also our best feelings and intentions. We are about to do some generous action; our grievances appear, and our good intentions are instantly weakened.

Frequently, grievances have no cause, and in this fact consists their force and their danger. The agonizing cry of Macbeth, who had only phantoms to fight, can be likened to calumny, and the same may be said of grievances, for they are of such flimsy stuff, pride alone forbids us to acknowledge them. And while capable of producing, if accumulated, even murderous hatred, they obstinately avoid any sincere explanation that could dissipate them, remaining encrusted and concealed in the depths of our being.

Mary Tudor declared that, if at her death her heart were opened, the name of Calais would be found engraven on it; and the same might well happen with certain grievances that some people carry in their hearts until death. If we trace our grievances to their source, we shall very often be covered with shame at having nourished so much bitterness for such trifling wrongs. People who do not cultivate grievances and complaints are they who give themselves to others; they cannot imagine that any one should be angry with them for some act done in a moment of forgetfulness, for some insignificant deed, or for a word spoken with no intention of wounding. Unfortunately no foresight, prudence, or kindness can safeguard them. They must belittle their own souls if they wish to understand certain mean hatreds.

In contradistinction, a different class of individuals exists who appear to take pleasure in defying hostility; they never open their mouths but to belittle others, spread calumny and scandal, never having a kind word for any one, and seeming to make it their object in life to provoke antipathy and vengeance. Irritable, nervous, choleric, they like to offend, wound and humiliate, imagining perhaps, that by these methods they maintain a superiority

over their fellows which they alone recognize. These makers of sorrow, are not worthy of even being considered, nor of being warned against the grievances and complaints they wilfully incite.

We would like to preserve all that is sweet, peaceful and just in life, but how protect these qualities from the hatred they provoke? Our only remedy is to guard the heart against harboring all bitter thoughts, and then perhaps, by the mysterious communion of mind with mind, (the effects of which we sometimes feel without knowing the cause,) it may be possible to cleanse the heart. The proper treatment is solely subjective, for none but interior work can free the soul from the parasites that absorb and suck its vitality.

We must not give to man the right to make us suffer, either through the pity or the love which he inspires. Is it not foolish to allow ourselves to be upset by the unfriendly manner of a person we have no interest in, or by a bitter word, neglectfulness, or rudeness from some one in no way connected with our affections? And even when we are wounded by friends, relations, and those who have in their hands our happiness or misery, is it wise to attach too much importance to this? If the

offense be slight, is it not better to overlook it? And if grave, how much nobler to pardon and forget. But if an injury cannot be pardoned in silence, it is far better then to say frankly what we feel about it.

Impossible, some will tell you, for many who have felt a shadow interpose itself between themselves and a friend, and who have sought a simple explanation, have found themselves before a wall of ice. "I have something against you?" "How is that possible?" "There is nothing, absolutely nothing." "You have certainly a fertile imagination." And the mock smile that accompanies the false words seems to say "you think you have wounded me. How idiotically vain you must be!"

Vanity and self-love, these are the great obstacles to any sincere exhibition of our mental wounds, and how rarely is this truth properly understood. Men concern themselves little about the reality of things,* but rather about the rôle they play in them, like social marionettes. (Of course I do not mean every one, but I am forced to accuse the greater number.) Acting has so invaded our minds and manners,

* See "Ames Dormantes." Chapter: False Self-Love.

that we all are playing parts, even when good works are in question. Formerly it was general for dramatic actors and actresses alone to claim the applause of the crowd. Nowadays, conferences, congresses and never-ending expositions, are so many theaters where every class of citizen has his or her rôle to play.

From a certain point of view this acting is useful. It is a spur to emulation, teaches a human being to cultivate his or her part, and cures timidity. The habit of appearing in public from childhood gives astonishing assurance. Little girls act comedies with amusing ease; they recite complimentary welcomes to sovereigns, or present addresses to the Holy Father, without a quiver of the eyelid, without a blush, with an aplomb and absence of emotion, that an actress grown old before the footlights might envy. Blushing in these times is only an indication of wounded vanity; the causes that formerly provoked it, modesty and shame, have been almost eliminated from modern life.

The present habit of always playing a part has given an enormous impetus to vanity, and consequently, greatly augmented the number of secret grievances. Every one is aspiring to a personal success, before some particular au-

dience. Hence it would be injudicious to admit another's triumphs, and soon there will be left in the world only competitors.

The pleasure of talking scandal has perhaps diminished, for the reason that, we have less time to devote to this occupation, but spontaneous and sincere praise has also disappeared in this twentieth century, and fame rarely escapes the hands that would tarnish and drag it down. To escape being disparaged and belittled one must have exceptional worth, or work in branches where competition is limited. In any case it is imperative that a great man in order that his neighbor may not be irritated by the applause he receives, should live far removed from the crowd and alone. Too frequent contact with people is sure to produce grievances and complaints.

The great law of cause and effect is often questioned because experience frequently contradicts it, but does it contradict itself? If unknown causes are taken into account, we could never maintain that an effect has not its cause; neither could we say there are causes without effects. The direct result of a cause is indeed sometimes destroyed or paralyzed by other and stronger causes that we do not perceive, and which produce different effects from

those we have a right to expect from certain visible causes. The great unknown that envelops the life of man, and which we encounter at every step, gives value to this law of cause and effect, thus satisfying logic and the instinct of justice inherent in us,—a doubtful value, if you will, but nearly everything is more or less a conjecture in this world of uncertainties into which we are born, and where we live, and die.

Insatiable vanity, the result of modern play-acting, or posing and the doctrine of equality, is responsible for grievances which find in vanity an exhaustless source, where they drink and are renewed. The vain man has desperate need of his fellows, because he looks to them for the flattery and adulation for which he thirsts, but as he gives no joy he cannot demand it of others. He is himself a maker of sorrow, not by wicked intention or cruel instincts, but simply because the praise and adulation he receives never rises to the summit of his desires. When this praise is refused, he revolts and becomes a prey to ill-will, that transforms him into a dangerous being, for little grievances assume with a vain man the proportions of hate.

The injurious effects of grievances and complaints may be seen in the social relations between men. Cordial relations are established between two individuals and appear to be the beginning of a friendship. Suddenly a coolness arises, the eyes betray pre-occupation and the words are less amiable. All the good elements have been disintegrated by some dissolving power. Sometimes this change is the work of calumny and scandal; often it results simply from a vain or sentimental grievance, caused by a slight forgetfulness of our friend's "amour propre" or by a success on our part that offends him, or again, some imaginary coolness that wounds him. In addition to the losing of a possible joy, from what might have become a friendly intercourse, disagreeable behavior is soon added, for every grievance that cannot be openly discussed works within, manifesting itself by secret and pernicious maneuvers.

The distinctive character of grievances is the creation of a hostile atmosphere towards those who have involuntarily been the cause. Significant inuendoes, perfidious insinuations and vague suspicions, are artfully disseminated. The unfortunate man who struggles with this cleverly tangled skein encounters difficul-

ties at every turn, without knowing to what cause he can attribute this ill-will. Things seem to slip from him, friendly hands are withdrawn and offers of service are refused. But evidently truth must be a force of itself, for as a rule it triumphs over calumny, and the pure, upright life in the end wins esteem.

If we live in glass houses we cannot for long pretend that our lives are passed in subterranean caverns. Nevertheless, doubt, cunningly diffused, suffices to paralyze personal effort, to retard a fine career, and to fill the heart with bitterness, the pungent flavor of which seldom disappears except through the struggles of the valiant and the strong.

Grievances between people united by the ties of blood, are less felt at large, but while not affecting social life, they poison the intimacy of the family circle. These grievances can be divided into two classes,—vanity and wounded feelings; but the effects are always identical,—cold looks, sullenness, sarcastic smiles, biting words and unkind inferences. We might sometimes suppose, from seeing members of the same family together and from their attitudes, that they were on bad terms, and yet in reality they love one another tenderly and are prepared to prove it by devotion and self-

sacrifice. The shadow we perceived comes from wrongs in embryo, not real wrongs, but these embryo wrongs, enlarged by imagination and distorted by vanity or false sentiment, develop and keep up grievances.

Susceptible natures torture themselves and others by constantly manufacturing grievances. Characters that are sullen, scolding, perverse and excitable, need them as they do some indispensable article of food, in order to maintain the attitude of discontent with which they torture their family and friends. Affection, devotion, the tender attentions with which they are surrounded, do not suffice to dry up the stream of bitterness that has its source in their hearts. The gift of one's whole self will not touch them, but should you forget to deliver a message, or refuse to derange your entire day in order to satisfy their caprice, they look upon you as an enemy. The disagreement is patched up, but begins again two days later.

The art of mutual tormenting is frequently found in people deeply attached to one another. People who are just and reasonable in public and in social relations, in their family circle fail singularly in this respect, being often daring in their injustice to a degree that just falls short of brutality. They lean with all the

weight of their depressing bad humor on those about them, and, failing to punish the real authors of the vexations from which they are suffering, they invent grievances against their families in order to avenge themselves for wrongs inflicted by outsiders. There are homes from which gaiety has been banished, not by sorrow, but by grievances and complaints, and when these complaints are clothed under a form of sentiment, they are even more exasperating. Thus a man may return to one of these homes late, and radiant, the bearer of some good news, only to be received with dark looks that seem to accuse him of every crime.

One susceptible member may suffice to ruin the life of an entire family. Every one fears to offend her and trembles at the thought of her discontent; she resembles a wicked divinity who refuses to be appeased save by new sacrifices of the goodness or the cowardice of others. It is easy to make grievances for oneself, for the human heart inclines that way; it is the line of least resistance. To yield to this inclination is the gravest fault that we can commit against our own souls, and every free man, master of himself, should crush under his heel the first shoot of this venomous plant. Great sorrows do not always overtake all of

us, and yet how many lives are sad and melancholy. If grievances and complaints could be eliminated, we should see faces wreathed in smiles that hitherto had lost the habit of gaiety.

Anger against those we love is absurd, and to torment them is criminal. When we reflect upon the tragic destiny of mankind, the sufferings caused by our own susceptibilities seem miserable and small. To be your own executioner is the height of folly, and yet this is the occupation of the majority of mankind. It would seem that serene heights affright him; he prefers unfruitful struggles, in which, with nothing to conquer, the heart's blood is painfully and uselessly spilled.

But some say it is impossible not to feel wrongs, and that this sensation is neither a grievance nor a complaint. The bitterness that dwells in hearts ferments inevitably, and to avoid these unhealthy fermentations in family life, there is only one practical remedy. Since it is asking too much of our pride to speak of the wrongs we suffer, in every family a register should be deposited in some safe place to which each member holds a key. On this register should be enumerated from time to time the different grievances cherished by one against another. If the charges to be entered

are of a grave and private nature, then a sealed letter might be slipped in between the leaves of the register. Wrong-doing, denounced without having recourse to words, would be an immense relief to many poor hearts burdened with an accumulation of grievances. The system would, moreover, awaken in scrupulous souls a desire to make reparation, and thus many a mental wound involuntarily inflicted, would be healed.

But this method will unfortunately not be adopted; hearts will continue to harbor bitterness and ill-will, and under many a family roof the same sullen countenance will be found. Men and women return home from the daily struggle for existence, hoping to find rest and warmth. Instead, they are confronted by complaints and grievances, destructive enemies to all peace and repose. They hear voices whispering at their approach, and know themselves to be the objects of some complaint.

In public and in professional life, where competition is rife between men, it would also be well to open a register of grievances. The fall of a Cabinet that may have serious results for a country, is often due to a series of little grievances, the guilty party often being quite unconscious of that of which he is accused.

How many men of value and weight in the community, have been kept out of office by the hostility of those whom they have unconsciously offended? How many votes of censure have resulted from the same cause? And how many careers have been retarded, or trammelled by official ill-will? The doctor, the lawyer, the banker, are also the victims of grievances. They see their clients diminishing and can not find out the cause. Fresh obstacles are perpetually piled up in their paths. A conspiracy of grievances is the cause. Two or three good hatreds joining hands, have succeeded in arousing hostile opinion against the offender. The same thing may be found in every trade and profession. Invisible enemies are more to be feared than known and tangible adversaries, however ferocious these latter may be.

If there are people whose characteristic trait is to excite hostility by brutal ways and bitter words, there are others whose souls resemble a beehive, where instead of bees, a buzzing swarm of grievances collect personal and also impersonal grievances, the latter gathered to strengthen and prop up their own. When these people speak, one feels that they can never express all the hatreds that are festering in their hearts; and scarcely are they

pacified, than immediately new and more bitter ones are fabricated.

We can never sufficiently pity these people whose daily bread is dipped in gall; and, in our opinion, they, and not the occasional great malefactors, are the worst makers of sorrow that society produces, for their wrong-doing is of daily occurrence and consequently more injurious. These miserable natures, in whom grievances form the psychic substance are found in every class of society; they eat of grievances and drink of them, and of them die; but without being irritable and morbid to the same extent, how numerous are the good people, who do not scruple to nourish certain cherished little grievances and veiled hatreds against a neighbor or a friend. The privileged classes, whose lives are passed in circumstances of ease and comfort, should not have grievances, and yet they also are subject to them; even as are those who struggle against evil tendencies and are vanquished in life.

The story in Scripture of the poor man's one sheep, carried off by his rich neighbor, is repeated constantly in our day by the favorite of fortune, who has a grievance against an unfortunate brother who may possess over him some small advantage. Often we are surprised

to find in people certain dislikes or a bit of malice that seem inexplicable, no apparent wrong having been committed, and nobody having interfered with their lives. How, then, explain their looks of hatred, their unexpected ill-natured words? It is hard to imagine that envy of one little sheep could embitter the possessor of flocks. Could the prophet Nathan reveal to such people as he did to King David, the state of their hearts, they too might fast and do penance, and feel shame at the littleness of their souls. But I fear that should the prophets present themselves at the doors of our contemporaries, they would probably be sent away as importunates whose message no one desired to hear.

The worst grievances are not always revealed by a hostile attitude. Those which are hidden under an appearance of cordiality, are the most dangerous. This is often the case in friendship, and especially in love. In love, either from pride, from a certain delicacy of soul, from fear of some unfortunate discovery, from dread of painful explanation, or from other causes less worthy, we hide our grievances, and so long as the passion lasts, we dissemble by ardent manifestation our secret bitterness. But the day that love diminishes or takes flight

our wronged one rises fully armed, and he who knows himself to be the object of his or her wrath, retreats in horror before hostile feelings that until then he had never suspected.

There is yet another class of grievances, those we voluntarily create against others, in order to explain away any grave charges they may proffer against us. This phenomenon is witnessed in every kind of attachment, but more especially in love. The lover whose passion first cools, seeks a reason for his inconstancy, and being responsible for the rupture either by bad conduct, interested motives, or fear, endeavors to excuse himself by finding grievances.

I once said to a woman who had suddenly lost her best friend after years of the closest intimacy, without a quarrel or scene, and for no apparent reason, "every time he thinks of you he will be filled with remorse." She replied: "Remorse? Not at all. He is quite sure that all the fault lies on my side. In retrospect, he has created imaginary grievance." I indignantly protested, ready even to pity her the more. She smilingly silenced me by putting her finger on my lips, saying: "do not pity me, I might have had grievances, but I have none;

in spite of everything, mine is the better part.” And she was right.

Grievances are like a double-edged sword that wounds on one side the heart it enters, on the other the heart that sends it forth, and the most unhappy heart always holds the weapon, for the point that pierces sinks into depths from whence it is difficult to draw it from the wound. In reality everybody is a victim to grievances; they that harbor as well as they who create them, and for this reason frank explanations are never resorted to. And the saddest thing of all is, that the causes are often so slight and the suffering so great, as in the case of the Neapolitan, who, having never read the works of Tasso and Ariosto, fought seventeen duels on their respective merits,

VI

SORROWS OF THE HEART

One word, one look can efface years of affection.—*Balzac.*

Sorrows of the heart occupy an important place in the various forms of suffering that men inflict upon one another, notwithstanding the fact that sentiment has greatly diminished in all latitudes and in all classes.

This modern hardening against all sensibility is called progress. In fact, in those countries where civilization has reached the highest state of perfection, exaggerated individualism, restlessness, and general materializations of everything, stifle our deeper feelings and prevent us from heeding the promptings of our hearts. Those nations that are still lagging in the race—that race which finally leads to practical indifference and stilted deportment,—have retained some warmth in their affections and some fire in their passions. Family affection still softens hearts, and despair in love continues to be fruitful in catastrophes. Devotion to parents, husbands and children produces in

southern Europe miracles of abnegation. Women of the south are still capable of complete self-forgetfulness for the men they love. A clever French writer once said to an Italian: "your compatriots are the only women who still know how to love. Look at a French woman in the street. She is always elegantly dressed and neatness itself; her husband, on the contrary, is often careless in his dress. In Italy a man is better taken care of than a woman, who effaces herself. It is evident that the resources of an Italian family in modest circumstances are employed to embellish the head of the family who represents the community."

The above observation is more or less true;* Italy being a country where love in all its forms—be it maternal, filial, fraternal, conjugal, or even unlawful,—is still the master passion. No doubt the higher civilization will in time penetrate that poetic land, and its inhabitants will learn to reason coolly. But however deplorable may be the hardening effects of this civilization on the souls of every nationality, certain natural instincts are so rooted in the human heart, that they never can be com-

*In the large cities of Italy, however, the love of dress in women is alarmingly on the increase.

pletely destroyed, and will ever be a cause of suffering to refined and sensitive natures.

In the preceding chapters I have spoken of sufferings which people inflict upon those whom they love. How often do members of one family seem born to torment each other. The grievances* and misunderstandings that separate hearts are infinite. A harsh word, a violent gesture, or a false interpretation of an act or motive, is like a knife in the heart of a sensitive nature. For this reason the young have moments of indescribable bitterness and despair, for they believe their sufferings must last forever, while those who occasion their unhappiness, being unaccustomed to consider the effect of their words, are quite unconscious of the evil they have done.

The most intense, secret, and demoralizing suffering experienced by the young is that of witnessing any weakening of character in those whom they loved and respected in childhood, when they could neither discern things nor reason. In proportion, as they acquire experience of life, and a faculty for judging, their idols crash from their pedestals and the fall brings with it bitter suffering. Youth being

*See chapter on Complaints and Grievances.

intolerant admits of no extenuating circumstances, and takes nothing into account; it does not stop to consider, but gives positive interpretations to doubtful appearances. Youth often is right, and often it is mistaken, but whether its impressions are real or false, the suffering is the same. To have been the cause, even unintentionally, of disillusioning the young, ought to cause remorse in consciences accustomed to recognize their own responsibilities. People who are morose, scolding, capricious and unreliable, are makers of sorrow, not only because they kill joy and sadden existence, but also because they tarnish their own images in other hearts. This to affectionate natures is a subtle and bitter suffering, the after effects of which cannot be measured.

A friend once said to me: "so long as my children were little, I lived at peace with my faults and bad habits. Perhaps they were annoying to others, but they caused me no uneasiness. But since my children have grown up, I am ashamed to meet their eyes, for I know they judge me, observe my attitude, my manner of acting, and measure my words. Nothing escapes them; neither the little 'white lie,' nor my illogical reasoning; neither unjustifiable irritation, nor any of the thousand

imperfections I formerly indulged in. I require now to be constantly on my guard, and what will finally happen is this, that, instead of my having trained them, my children will have formed my character."

Andrew Towianski, the Polish mystic, who aspired to reestablish all things in Christ, asserts that the only real sin is to repulse affection. The wickedest of all wrongs is to offer a stone to those who have given us bread. Sorrows that men unnecessarily inflict upon those whom they love, will undoubtedly be counted for crimes at the bar of Supreme Justice.

Many people amuse themselves at this game of inflicting sorrow, even those who proclaim and believe themselves to be just and honest. There are, it seems, in the human soul, cruel recesses that may be likened to a secret desire to inflict suffering upon those whom we have in our power, and perhaps it is because, being conscious of our own unworthiness, we despise others instinctively for the love they give us. This phenomenon that has embittered the daily lives of many suffering hearts, is manifested in every form of attachment, but finds its fullest expression and occurs with greater frequency in love.

Love between the sexes is too complex a question to be treated at length in these pages. Experience of life, reflection, objective study of the sentiments and sensations that exalt and trouble the inner life, make it clear to every sincere observer that **no** fixed form can be applied to love. If the wisest philosophers on this subject were to take honestly into consideration nature as love's accomplice, the conditions of our social life, the rights and duties of individuals, and the moral precepts indispensable to a well-organized society, they would be forced to admit their inability to solve the problem.

In the first place, no general law can be applied to love, as only particular cases exist. Those who ignore this primary principle are apt either to treat love with exaggerated rigor, or else fall into an immeasured indulgence. In any case, even in a progressive world, love must ever remain a disturbing element. Were it possible to reach the ideal and erect a temple of truth in the city of Justice; were it possible to succeed in suppressing misery, in extinguishing ambitions and vulgar cupidity, thus instituting a reign of moral and material probity, we would have yet to reckon with the irresistible attraction that draws men and

women together, and can never be destroyed. Consequently, even where order seems to be solidly established, love, that source of perpetual sorrow and joy, will enter and disorganize everything.

Sorrow, being the natural reaction of joy, this kind of suffering can never be done away with. This is undoubtedly true, but we ourselves add to it useless bitterness by our false point of view. If we really knew how to love,* the intensity of our affection would never diminish, and men and women would cease to be their own executioners.

The kind of love which we call unhappy love can be cured by an energetic effort of the will, controlled by reason. That form of sentiment, in which one heart is unmoved, while the other is consumed with vain hopes and useless regrets, is often made light of. This, however, is unjust, for if certain of these unreciprocated attachments are often ridiculed, they may be sometimes very touching. Unhappy love is an unfortunate condition of things, but is inevitable, for all of us. Men and women alike sometimes inspire feelings to which it is impossible to respond. These affections are

*See "Ames Dormantes." Chapter, False Self-Love.

often created with intent by a woman's vanity, or by the banal flattery that certain men offer to the daughters of Eve. But generally speaking, they are nearly always spontaneous effusions, where neither person can be held responsible, but these will probably become less frequent in the twentieth century, sentiment being on the wane.

For the rest, unhappy love, being something unreasonable in itself, and not necessarily a lasting thing, except with very sensitive natures, is placed in the second class in the nomenclature of love sorrows. During the romantic periods of the world's history, young girls died of disappointed love, and even to-day, young men commit suicide when their passion is not returned, but in such cases self-murder is rather revolt against suffering, than proof of deep feeling.

It is interesting to observe how differently, when the love fever has reached its height, it acts on the two sexes. In general, women laugh at a lover whose passion they do not return. Their hearts are devoid of pity; at times they can be even cruel in their mocking indifference. They, however, who are conscientious, good and kind—whether or not responsible for the feelings they inspired—endeavor to console

their rejected adorers. Some women even succeed in transforming love into friendship, and the unhappy men who have passed through their hands cherish the memory of a moral cure, with a tenderness that is perhaps more wholesome than the souvenir of some successful amour.

Men are not so clever in this kind of treatment, preferring other methods; that, for instance, of being touched by devotion and allowing themselves to be loved. Certainly they have more pity than women, for their victims. Is this vanity, or goodness? Perhaps both. In any case, they generally refuse to be makers of sorrow for those who proffer affection, without reflecting, however, that such condescension in love is sometimes attended by more serious consequences than indifference, clearly and frankly admitted.

But these one-sided loves, and those founded upon a passing emotion, do not ordinarily leave marked traces in a heart; neither do they shorten life. It is when disaster comes upon two beings who have given each other the full and complete measure of love, that the heart is torn assunder, and the foundations of the being are shaken. Physically strong men and women do not succumb to the shock. Never-

theless, something within them has been strained and broken, the traces of which will always remain. This rending of the heart is frequently caused by the disproportion existing between the aspirations of men and their ability to realize them. At great intervals, it is true, men and women find their affinities; then love is eternal; but these are exceptional cases, for perfect fidelity seems contrary to the imperious laws of nature, over which we now exercise only feeble control.

Love that is not based on a firm foundation is killed by an adverse breath. It sometimes happens that two people who tenderly love one another, and whose moral existence seems merged into one, suddenly separate, for no apparently just cause, without a quarrel or an infidelity, as if the substances that formed their hearts, minds and senses were suddenly transformed, and their paths from that time diverged. When this deplorable condition occurs in legitimate unions, no outward rupture is acknowledged, but joy has fled from these lives, and between two beings who once lived in closest sympathy, remains only the cold tie of formed habits and common interests. Where, on the contrary, the marriage tie has not destroyed independence, rupture is immediate.

To the friends of yesterday, fiancés or lovers, no distance seems far enough to separate them one from another, so eager are they to get away from the love of the past—perhaps because they feel ashamed of having betrayed their own souls.

When a change of heart is felt simultaneously, no suffering follows; only sadness for the light that has gone out. But, generally speaking, love may be dead in one heart and still live in the one that is grieving and forsaken. Generally men are accused of first sounding the death knell of passion. This is both true and false; true in the sense that men are naturally less faithful, false too, in that they can sometimes remain constant, even when unfaithful; while a woman, when assailed by the first temptation to love another, has only one desire: to be done with the old affection. Is she more sincere, or less rich in her nature, or was her frivolous heart less profoundly touched by her first love? Is it, that each new love enters unchallenged absolute master of her heart? In any case, it is certain that women in general, can pass the sponge over memories, and forget more easily than men. A woman can meet with ease the man whom she once loved with-

out a quiver or a heart thrill. The sight of one for whose sake she often risked her all, leaves her unmoved. He has become for her a negligible quantity. Men pretend that they never forget, even after several times replacing the woman first loved.

In this order of sentiment and sensation, the shades of feeling are infinite, and it is impossible even relatively to establish any guiding signals or principles. One thing only is certain and undeniable: After having been makers of joy, men and women become makers of sorrow one for the other. And is this latter state an inevitable consequence? Is this reaction necessary? Does it not depend upon ourselves to prevent these effects diminish their violence and alleviate their sadness? An awakened conscience, a clearer view of mutual responsibilities, compassion for another's sorrows, and great respect in love, might perhaps prevent some of the moral catastrophes that devour and destroy so many lives.

I wish it understood that I am not dealing now with violent tragedies caused by love—murders, suicides, the sacrifice of the innocent, lives given over to vice, families dishonored—for such crimes are included under the

command, "Thou shalt not kill." Those responsible for the aforementioned misfortunes, even though their consciences sleep, know through their intelligence that they have committed crimes, broken social laws, disturbed the peace of society, and destroyed something in the harmony of the universe.* In certain cases the law intervenes to punish these people and should they escape the penal code, society reserves for them other methods of punishment. We should say rather, according to the pessimist, that they have their recompense. This is true also, but only an apparent truth, belonging to the abnormal as sometimes produced by nature in order to prove that she is superior to her own laws.

If a moral transformation is to be effected in those characters capable of grave misdemeanors, and if the idea of divine sanction is to penetrate their intelligences, they must punish themselves through remorse and regret for the wrongs they have committed. But grace alone,—that mysterious operation that must ever remain the eternal secret of the gods—

*This state of semi-consciousness of wrong-doing is fast disappearing. To-day we admire great crimes, and treat those who believe in the necessity of punishment for the homicide, as narrow minded and lacking in intelligence.

can produce a revolution in the soul. No human influence can ever achieve this, however intense and energetic. The conscience must first be awakened, interrogated, roused, and made to thrill with emotion, for all moral emotion presupposes a certain moral honesty, a sort of desire for good and a shame for evil.

Such a degree of evolution, however, does not prevent us from causing others indescribable and useless sufferings; useless, because the suffering, inevitable in the ebb and flow of our passions, is not always the bitterest part of love sorrows. That which tortures the soul more than the brevity of its happiness is betrayal, untruthfulness, and cowardice, and a torture yet greater is the sudden realization that one has loved a fantom, that the being for whom one has lived for years is a complete stranger, who, up to that moment, has hidden his real self. Here you have the worst form of suffering. If those who love each other had also mutual respect, they would show themselves in their true colors before, during and after marriage. Before marriage, sincerity would interfere with many intimacies and often prevent marriage; during marriage it would give a feeling of security that would solidify happiness; after marriage, that is to

say, at the moment of separation or rupture, it would leave a certain sweetness in the memory. The past would not be poisoned, and in the heart that remained faithful, the image of the loved one would not be tarnished.

Unfortunately a prejudice against sincerity, especially in love, prevails everywhere. The pretext made of the consideration we owe one another, strengthens it; as if frankness were not always and everywhere our highest tribute to respect. It is an error to say sincerity is incompatible with love. And why? Houses built upon sand must fall. But is this to be regreted? For true love stands "four square to every wind that blows," like a fortress whose foundation rests upon the solid rock. All the rest may be called by true names; that is, it is due to the demands of one's nature, to vanity or vice; to demands men can always find other means to satisfy without a seasoning of disloyalty that makes criminals of them, and occasions suffering and deception.* The only real science of life, that which can be applied to love as well as to everything, is this: to give all things their proper place, their true value. But some may object that, by removing

*See "Ames Dormantes," Chapter, Worship of Truth.

the garlands of love, its attraction diminishes. But flowers are of its essence and indispensable.

Qual fior cadea sul lembo,
Qual sulle trecce bionde,
Qual si posava in terra e qual su l'onde;
Qual con un vago error
Girando, pareva dir; Qui regna amor.*

Petrarch did well to cover Laura with flowers, the natural accompaniments of love, but we must substitute fresh flowers for artificial ones and crown with these only the front of the true deity, leaving imitation dieties undecorated.

We laugh at the quacks at fairs extolling their drugs as panaceas for every ill, and yet a magic medicine exists from the moral point of view;—this medicine is sincerity, which we do not take. Wherever it is applied, the effects are salutary—sincerity in regard to others and sincerity with ourselves. If man would learn to discern the nature of the emotions constraining him, tragedies would occur less frequently in the life of the affections, and the ties of love would be severed with more dignity when the knell of separation sounds.

*Translation: "A flower fell on her knee, another on her golden tresses, another on the ground, another in the shade, another gracefully mistaken, whirling about seems to say: Here love reigns."

Suffering is nothing, but how many souls are lost because they have been loved in the wrong way? We nearly always find in lives given over to vice that the prime cause lies in disappointed love, or, in some other sentimental complication of the affections. Generally speaking we are occupied only with the direct and immediate consequences of love, and even scrupulous consciences do not look beyond. Few people, if any, reflect upon the ulterior effects that may be felt in the character and future moral existence of two united beings. Those who have become merely interested in one another are equally indifferent, not only in their youth,—that is excusable,—but also in their maturity, which is less pardonable.

In cultivating sincerity in thought and word, we awaken our consciences to a realization of our responsibilities. To make oneself beloved, to accept a great love, to reciprocate and enjoy it, is mutually to assume charge of one another's souls. Could men and women be taught from childhood that makers of sorrow, either through frivolity, selfishness, cowardice, or any other bad or unworthy motive, resemble hardened criminals, they would inevitably acquire, in love also, a more profound and delicate sense of their own obligations.

It is difficult to determine which of the sexes falls most frequently the victim of love. From the social point of view, it is the woman, public opinion being more severe on her weaknesses than on a man's. Some women save themselves from censure by cleverness and cunning, but many succumb altogether, and having lost the control of their own lives become a prey to chance.

From the moral point of view also, the woman is the victim, for not knowing like a man how to keep her balance, she strikes her colors, abandons herself to her passionate impulses, and the stigma of an irregular life becomes only too apparent. From the moment when she becomes lax in her morals, the fact is evident from her manner and appearance, while her companion of the opposite sex in similar circumstances often maintains a better tone, and this because other passions still dominate him, keeping him active, and serving as a corrective to the effects of vice.

In fact, from the standpoint of sentiment, women are usually supposed to suffer more than men, and formerly this was undoubtedly true. Is it to-day in the same degree, and will it be so in the future? The end of the nineteenth, and the beginning of the twentieth cen-

turies, have fostered the growth of a class of young girls, whose manner of regarding life disconcerts such of their friends as have lived in earlier times. Flirting, though its object remains the same, has changed its note, being no longer sentimental. The aim of some flirtations is marriage, or something worse; other flirtations are simply games, the result of feminine calculation, for women in the best society must have numerous admirers; they are useful, giving her a standing and strengthening her position.

Love, as we know, has no place in these maneuvers, and the majority of worldly women escape the suffering which love brings. If they yield easily to temptation, it would be ridiculous to seek for a cause in too great tenderness of heart and ardent imagination, for in reality worldly women fall for reasons it would be out of place to enumerate here. Fortunately these fashionable flirts are recruited from among a certain class, and represent only a small portion of the feminine world. Many other women still feel, as did their mothers, and their happiness being bound up in love, they despair when affection is withdrawn.

This inclines me to the belief that even to-day women suffer through their affections more

than men. "What an error;" said lately an old man of unusual intelligence and well versed in these controversies, "when a man really loves, he loves more deeply than a woman, and sometimes at the price of his life. In my long life I have known several men killed by the treachery of the woman they loved while the woman always survived. When they die or kill themselves, grief of the heart has been complicated with other things." Opinion being divided upon the entity and intensity of sorrows of the heart, felt by the two sexes, a theory on this subject cannot be advanced.

In any case, as I have said, in love there are only particular cases; each individual suffers, not according to sex, but according to his or her capacity for suffering. There are people born to sorrow; others turn to joy as flowers turn to the sun, and one thing only is true,—suffering, and it is just this suffering that we wish to prevent, lighten, console, and transform. Three remedies can be applied: Sincerity, respect and altruism in love. I have already spoken of sincerity, which prevents the prostitution of love, and that guards intact respect for it. But man is strangely inconsistent in this manner. He will for love's sake

incur great dangers, and catastrophes, will risk fortune, his health, his life; suffer in the inmost fibers of his being, and yet speak of love with disdain as a worthless thing. And as we descend in the social scale this truth becomes more evident, for it seems quite natural to treat lightly something one despises. In fact, the sufferings human beings inflict upon one another in this order, are generally caused by lack of respect for the sentiment they wound.

Could we only carefully examine the character of love, its intensity and depth, we would show a corresponding consideration, and above all, frankness would enter into our relations and line of conduct. Hence it seems evident that sincerity and respect in love depend upon one another. When we cease to deceive ourselves about the nature of the attraction we feel, one for another, false love will not then be confounded with the real. When love is true, the chances are that it will last much longer, each one respecting the sentiment in the other, and if love changes or dies, the memory of happy days will not be tarnished in the heart, the soul being spared the intolerable and humiliating anguish of having loved an unknown person whose real self it has never seen.

Altruism in love! I use the word altruism as it seems to be the only one capable of expressing my meaning. Selfishness, a desire to receive as much, or more than we give, carefulness not to be a dupe, jealousy of everything that attracts or interests the being whom we wish entirely to absorb, all are certainly so many causes of suffering. From the religious point of view, the devotee who begs God to recompense and love her for the good she has done, merits the harsh criticism she calls forth. This way of looking upon the relations of Creator and Creature is a weapon in the hand of an unbeliever, but he in turn, as with the greater portion of mankind, applies this reprobated method to love.

If we loved, for love's sake alone, and if we loved the person for what he or she is, and not for what they can give; if we thought of others oftener and less of ourselves; if we were generous in the liberty we give them, how much bitterness would be spared? Some may say, love has then ceased to be. But why? Is it necessary to be selfish and exclusive in love? I can only touch on this subject, but I have known persons—they are exceptions it is true—who, loving in this generous way, have been loved longer than others, and will per-

haps hold love to the end. Is there not something low and commercial in wanting an equivalent for what we give, and does not this bargaining strip love of its generosity and dignity?

If we could learn in love to love others for themselves and not for what they can give us, it would enlarge and ennoble our hearts and minds. When we shall have learned this, and when between relations or friends affection is disinterested, we shall have secured them from a certain kind of suffering. One entire class of sorrows of the heart, and this, the bitterness, will have disappeared.

And why not try to apply this same system to love? Somebody once asked the famous Roman, Atticus, how he managed to keep his friends up to the end of his life. His simple reply was: "I never expected anything from them." It is difficult, no doubt, to maintain during outbursts of passion the serene indulgence peculiar to friendship, but without attaining to the state of Atticus, who expected nothing, where the desire to give much, dominates a soul, the sting of wounded vanity would not be felt in the flesh, for wounded vanity would change its object, making it a matter of pride to give, and not receive.

As I said in the beginning, I do not wish to write a chapter on love. I have only touched on the subject of this passion, studying it from the point of view of the suffering it causes. This suffering, however, can be in part eliminated by sincerity, respect and altruism, and can also be eliminated if we realize that the essential base of such suffering is untruthfulness, its end mutual distrust, and selfishness its inevitable companion. But to realize this truth men and women must learn to know one another better.

VII

WHAT MEN THINK OF WOMEN

If adages and axioms contain a certain amount of truth, they contain also many errors. Thus it is the custom to say: a Nation always has the Government best suited to it, and that, if men are what they are, they owe it to the women who have brought them up, and the women whom they have loved. The latter is true of maternal love, but it is less true of the relations between the sexes, for every son of Adam carries within him a spirit of rebellion, a spirit that renders him impatient of feminine influence. Jealous of his liberty, he zealously aims to keep it intact. A woman, on the contrary, is quite willing to follow a man's advice, and submit to his direction.

When Alexandre Dumas *Fils* stated that the head of a family ought to represent, for a woman, not only her husband, but her friend, counsellor and even her priest, he exceeded the bounds of influence which a man should exert over the mind of his companion. The claims of women have, since Dumas' days, shaken this theory, but the arguments opposed to Dumas' are perhaps more apparent than real.

The future only can show whether women's claims resolve themselves into a mere play upon words, empty words that dazzle humanity, and acquire force through the movements they set in motion.

We cannot generalize in speaking of women; differences of education create differences in mentalities. However, certain instincts must be common to all. In speaking of women of the upper classes, when defining tendencies foreshadowing their destinies, we must judge of averages. It is impossible to divide women into classes, and to specify on separate pages an argument that applies first to the brilliant woman of the world; second, to the serious middle-class woman; third, to an artistic or literary woman, and, fourth, to a woman who trains youth, or is a working woman, or a woman of the people. The latter have unquestionably a psychology less complex than their more highly developed sisters, and offer fewer subjects for analysis. The hard labor that crushes their lives, leaves little material for studying the intellectual and moral influences upon them of places, men and events. The cultivated woman, who possesses a certain refinement of habit and education, furnishes a better field for observation, for she begins to

know herself and the forces within her, and sometimes can even search her own soul.

Fashionable women, from the nature of the lives they lead, are inclined to observe more than other women, the places they occupy in the opinions of men; first, because they have greater opportunities of meeting them, and, second, because they desire the approval of men. This fact is an affair of instinct, custom and reasoning. Fashionable women consider that the admiration of men confers upon their persons and intelligences an honor that a fellow woman's approval is powerless to bestow. On two points only do they seek the help and sanction of their sisters; on their position in society and on what is usually called "feminine elegances," the toilet and its accessories, house furnishings and the thousand little details of a well-ordered interior. In questions concerning smart carriages and horses, of sport, and even of the elegant appointments of the table, the appreciation of the opposite sex is more flattering to them; it lends to them a feeling of security that gives weight and balance both in their own eyes and in the opinion of others.

These special sides of the question deal exclusively with fashionable and luxurious life, which is the privilege, or the cause of boredom

to the few; but the state of soul revealed, is found in all classes of women. The demand for women's rights has brought about few changes, for women in general continue to feel and think as before. Their contentment still depends upon the approbation of men. Even the most fervent advocate of woman's rights will be found, on close inspection, to be permeated with the old and original weakness, which is an ineradicable instinct. She may, however, disguise the fact under an apparent hostility.

Some pious women, or women with lofty souls, free since childhood from taint of vanity, seek in their moral life a higher sanction than the men of their entourage can give them; but even these attach more importance to a personal compliment from a man, than to like praise from a woman. Atavism is responsible for a fixed habit of belief that men alone can decree whether a woman be charming or the reverse, and, as the word "charming" carries, and will always carry, enormous weight with woman, every daughter of Eve will continue to seek admiration from companions on the way. At least she will do this as long as her youth lasts, or as she endeavors to retain it. On this particular point, to effect a radical

change would be impossible. To the end of time women will brighten and expand under the admiration and approval of men. There are, without doubt, shades of differences. Some women want the good opinion of one man only. Others limit ambition to their friends and relations, and again another class who are ordinary, vulgar and insatiably vain, thirst for the homage of every passer-by.

The same phenomenon is manifested by intelligent women, who are vain of their intellect, and this is equally justifiable. Every epoch has given to the world superior women, but, isolated cases apart, it is only lately that woman has taken her proper place in the intellectual world. Here she meets with an elder brother who has preceded her on the way. She recognizes in him greater knowledge than she possesses; faculties for reasoning that are lacking in herself. She sees also in his brain, prepared by generations of abstract research, powers of deduction of which she is incapable. She understands also that this man is equipped for the struggle of life with forces of which she knows nothing. And in her admiration—admitted or dissembled, conscious or unconscious—for this being who dominates her by tradition, by pride of sex, and because he feels

himself the stronger, women lose sight of their own often marvelous gifts of perception, subtlety and intuition.

The intellectual bondage in which frequently an element of contempt exists, will be shaken off by intelligent women when they have learned to acquire a true scale of values. They will not continue to yield up blindly to men the right to dominate their minds. They will know when they deserve to be deferred to, and to be chosen as judges. The most conservative women have ceased already to be as the cunning or docile followers of yesterday. Some have learned to form their own judgments, to be free, and to manage their own business affairs. The women who have really achieved intellectual independence are, however, thus far greatly in the minority. In Latin countries they can be easily counted. This particular class is more generally found among Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians, who contend that they have thrown off the yoke that weighed upon their intellectual faculties. In fact, women of the North no longer know that love which completely surrenders self; they lend themselves, but do not give themselves. For all that, however, they do not seek with less avidity for masculine approval.

And if henceforth they intend to look upon man as their adversary, he will continue to be an adversary in whom they will be strangely interested.

Consequently, in spite of the protestations of certain ultra-advocates of women's rights, it remains evident that the twentieth century woman is still open to the fascinations of a man, not only in love, which is fatal, but in nearly every other relationship. Hence, masculine influence must be reckoned with in surveying the future destiny of woman; and it will be necessary for our purpose to recall how it was formerly exercised; under what form it is manifested to-day, and to forecast the way in which it may be modified in future.

I have neither the pretensions, nor the intentions of reconstructing here the history of the moral and social conditions of women as they have existed in all ages. Every one knows the many phases of her evolution, the laws that have discriminated against her, the changes of public opinion in her regard, and the conquests she has gradually achieved, in certain countries, from the point of view of economic independence and individual liberty.

From this general view it is evident that in all well-organized societies where woman is

subject to man, she is the guardian of the hearthstone and accepts the maternal and conjugal yoke. In decadent centers, on the contrary, she emancipates herself, acquires privileges, and is everywhere in evidence. A corruption of morals apparently loosens her fetters. Christianity was first to raise her, it is true, but when a reaction set in against the vicious excesses of paganism, the church regarded women as dangerous and seductive temptresses. She was to be considered Satan's most able ally. The campaign against her was carried so far, that during certain deliberations a council was requested to decide if she possessed a soul.

Chivalry rescued woman from this degrading condition and gave her new importance. She was not made free, however—she was put upon a pedestal. The reaction at this period was levelled against brutal and tyrannical customs. This reaction idealized woman and made of her a symbol. This idealization clothed her with armor that gave a sense of security to a husband departing for a crusade or other foreign war, who thus thought to insure his wife's fidelity. Purity was above all the virtues most highly prized, but should a wife succumb to temptation, her lord reserved to

himself the right to punish her brutally and ferociously as a vile slave, and not as the delicate highborn lady whose colors he had proudly carried in the tournament and to the Holy Wars. During the Renaissance, because of the growing corruption of morals, women acquired great social importance, an importance that in France lasted until the Revolution. The seventeenth century became more severe in judgments in matters of love. The influence of Port Royal* and the great French Bishops was exercised even on the romantic and dissolute heroines of the Fronde and on the beautiful and gay ladies of the Court of the Roi Soleil.

In spite of their faults, these notorious women felt God within their souls. The Longuevilles and the Vallières did by exercises of voluntary expiation humble their pride and mortify the flesh.

The eighteenth century effaced all idea of morality in ladies of the Court and women of fashion in nearly every country of Europe. What was demanded of women at that period was to be charming, elegant, and tender; to show courage when called upon to die

*A reference to the celebrated convent of that name, founded at Versailles.

and to be clever in all things. During this period a custom of ignoring public opinion and society was characterized as an amiable weakness, but it is what the church, reformers, and moralists in every age have called by uglier names.

The influence of a Rousseau was needed to awaken the feminine conscience of the eighteenth century, to reveal to her nature and maternity; to open her mind to new horizons of life, to develop her sensitiveness and lead her back to virtue;—a sensual virtue far removed from Christian purity, but virtue, nevertheless; the virtue of a Julie who, although loving St. Preux, became, nevertheless, Madame de Volmar and still continued “*les voluptés innocents*.”

Monsieur Faguet some years ago drew a cutting parallel between the different ideas of Rousseau and Fénelon concerning the education of women and their work. It is evident that the Archbishop of Cambrai was infinitely more modern in his views than was Jean Jacques, who contended that women should be brought up to please their husbands. Bossuet's adversary only saw in women human beings whose souls are immortal, who above everything must learn to live that they may perfect

themselves—all else being secondary. Fénelon foresaw the woman whom the first half of the nineteenth century brought forth, and who sometimes realized the idea of a more serious destiny than had been conceived for her by the preceding century.

The homely virtues of order, honesty and austerity which had been introduced by the “*tiers état*,” became highly prized in France, not from the point of view of wordly pleasure, but as essential foundations of family life. Public opinion upheld these virtues, and men thought it their duty, and also their interest, not to offend directly against them. We have only to read the history of that epoch to convince ourselves of the truth of this statement. Writers and dramatists who had been daring enough to attack or ridicule in bold language these domestic virtues,—writers, who to-day would have been considered faint-hearted,—would then have brought upon themselves an outburst of popular indignation. The censors endeavored to modify Emile Angier’s play, “*Les Lionnes Pauvres*,” when it was submitted to them for examination. The heroine, it was said, should receive on the stage, “the just reward for her crime.” If the husband should refuse to kill her, it would be easy for

her to contract a serious illness—smallpox, for example—that would strike at her beauty and satisfy the moral demands of spectators.

An accusation of hypocrisy has been brought against that period. Morals, it is said, were no better than they are to-day. Discussion of this question would lead me far away from my subject, but it is unquestionably certain that corrupt ideas were less general then than they are now, and were to be found only in circles where pleasure was worshiped. The evolution of the novel alone proves this. In my youth certain books that the strict mothers of the twentieth century permit their daughters to read were forbidden. Are these mothers wise or not? To answer this we must take into account the forces of reaction, for sins that are only suspected have often more prestige than sins brutally exposed. The mysterious must always be attractive. The habit, however, of calling a spade a spade can also have its dangers, if only from an esthetic point of view. We may, at heart, regret the passing of an age when certain matters were delicately veiled and illusions were preserved.

But it is impossible to travel backwards. The girl of to-day, even should she have no desire to leave the path her forefathers trod,

finds herself hardly out of her intellectual swaddling clothes, and scarcely taking her first step in society, especially in the great cities, when she comes into contact with brutal realities. How can she continually ignore certain facts? The newspapers, in which doubtful questions are openly discust; social and philanthropic works with suggestive titles, everywhere in evidence; the novels a modern girl reads openly or in secret; the conversations she takes part in,—all this puts her in touch with the undercurrents of life. Thus before marriage, motherhood or personal experience, she has been directly instructed.

Women of all classes, therefore, are called upon, much more than formerly, to face certain delicate questions from a general point of view, and from the general, the particular case inevitably results. Formerly a woman was the victim of accident, or the unexpected, and for this reason she was not supposed to reflect upon future possibilities; her line of conduct depended upon chance, religion, personal sentiments and fear of public opinion. To-day she knows that public opinion can be easily circumvented. As to feelings and sentiment, she has learned to doubt their lasting qualities,

and this attitude arms her, and at the same time disarms her, against them according to the occasion. But where religion influences women it elevates them, renders them more human and softens the decrees against them. Chance alone has not changed, since its essence is still unknown.

Consequently there is more reason and also more strength of will, in the impulse that a modern woman gives to her affections, but this progress has been made only in strong and intelligent women. The weak, the impressionable, the unstable, and the nervous, having no moral support, do not understand why they ought to struggle against instincts and desires, whose accomplices they themselves are. With some women, instinct is stronger than will, and although when seeing there is no advantage in resistance, they decide to yield, they do not technically speaking fall. But this involuntary manner of escaping from sin cannot be classed with moral courage; neither can it give any real joy.

It is for this reason, no doubt, that women whose reputations are intact, and who seem to have escaped misfortune, wear discontent and dejection written on their countenances. They

have stayed in the narrow path without knowing the reason why,—from hesitation, timidity, lack of courage,—and console themselves for the happiness they imagine they have lost. They are without memory of the rapture which victory over self gives to valiant souls.

Even if participation in social movements does not broaden women in the measure that is hoped for, women will at last be henceforth required to understand themselves better, to comprehend better the direction they wish to give their lives, and especially the life of the affections. In these conditions, demoralization will be perhaps quicker, more deliberate and less excusable. Falls will be less pathetic, repentance more difficult. But sweeter and more human virtues will be practised as a counter-balance. Having reflected from youth upon the consequences of her acts, sounded her heart, measured her forces, estimated the advantages of her moral and social situation, the woman who from conviction has preferred the straight way will feel more pity and gain a deeper comprehension, not only for her weak and passionate sisters, but for those who are born incapable of resistance and effort, and who are vain, silly, crazy or vicious.

In the evolution of the feminine conscience on this special subject what role is man's opinion to play, that opinion so mighty to the feminine mind?

Besides religious teaching, and those moral and wise councils which lay the foundation of a girl's education, it was the custom—and still is the custom in certain families—to insist with them upon the contempt that men feel in their hearts for coquetry and light behavior in a woman, and that the apparent homage of men disguises the disdain they feel. They do not marry the instigating young girl, neither do they respect the woman who gets herself talked about. This theme has been developed beyond all measure, and no doubt the mothers who formulated these maxims, and their successors who hold them to-day, were and are convinced of the truth of these maxims.

It is difficult, even for the ordinary observer, to uphold this thesis which was true in greater part during the first half of the nineteenth century. Public opinion then acted the part of a censor, demanding that morals should be outwardly respected and crimes punished. A young girl too free in her manners had much difficulty in finding a husband, and against women of doubtful reputation certain doors

were closed. Even men did not dare to uphold them, for fear of losing caste in the eyes of the world.

Since those days, society has made rapid strides, and also contemporary literature, which, more or less, faithfully reflects its true condition. In any case the meaning of words has been modified. Under the name of "flirtations," coquetry is everywhere accepted in all its form, and no one hesitates to indulge in it. Women regard it as a right and are proud of their proficiency. A young girl who does not know how to flirt is considered a negligible quantity in the drawing room, and is less frequently invited out than others who are experts. Fashionable men openly declare flirting a young girl's first social duty, and coquetry carried even to the danger point, is no longer considered a bar to marriage either by young men or by their families. This is no doubt true, because coquetry, like everything else openly practised, loses its danger. It possesses no longer the charm of forbidden fruit; becomes less a matter of sentiment, and takes on the manners and ways of a sport.

In big cities and fashionable drawing rooms women and young girls speak openly of their

firtations. An open flirtation is only considered a sort of comradeship with a suspicion of something more; and can be definitely multiplied as a literary and artistic flirtation, a dancing flirtation, a sporting or fashionable flirtation, and so on. Content with very little they can aspire to all. The thing is innocent in itself; the danger arises where flirtation is made a habit. It then becomes a craving for excitement and can, if carried to excess, produce most unwholesome effects. It is like drunkenness, and to arrive at a state of inebriation, yesterday's portion will not be sufficient for to-day. We see flirtatious young girls who give up this pastime after they are married. Others continue it, and intensify it by the experience they have acquired, for they know that if cleverly done no one will reproach them with trying to attract the attention of men, least of all the men themselves, who say, "But we are grateful to women for their coquetry, even if we expect nothing more; it is a homage they pay us; those indifferent to our admiration we regard as being without sex."

This attitude of mind is found among all classes—even the common people. Young working girls plead flirtation as an excuse when reproached for their appealing manners,

and expensive toilettes. It is, they say, the only way of catching a husband. There exists evidently a large class who think differently, but they are greatly in the minority. There are ideal lovers who scorn pretense and who keep in their hearts the image of a pure, proud woman; but they also belong to a small group, and, taking humanity as a whole, it is the majority that must be considered.

Hence it has become false, generally speaking, at least in France, to uphold as a principle of sound education, the statement that coquetry is prejudicial to young girls in the eyes of the other sex, since quite the contrary is the case, especially if this coquetry is accompanied with elegant manners and deportment, and the flavor of a little hauteur. It is also incorrect—and this is more serious—to try to persuade girls that the men of to-day judge light conduct in women severely. Where his daughter, sister, fiancée or wife is concerned, the father, brother, fiancé or husband ceases to be indulgent to weaknesses, and sometimes, even in Italy for example, is ready to kill the guilty one. But in such cases it is rather a question of jealousy, “*amour propre*,” or personal honor, than morals, or a repugnance to the

fault committed; and even this desire for satisfaction is fast disappearing among the upper classes.

This softening of the masculine mind, and this renouncing of reprisals, arise from two things,—cynicism and justice; cynicism, because men feel less the point of honor where a woman is in question; justice, because they consider more closely every particular case, and no longer lump together in a sweeping contempt all those who have loved and sinned. And yet, however godless may be society to-day, the words of Christ, “He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone,” are beginning to penetrate the modern conscience. It must therefore be, from our educational point of view, more correct and dignified, to look the facts in the face, and break once and for all with worn-out traditions and repeat themselves from generation to generation, without any one taking the trouble to verify their accuracy or probability. Nothing is so dangerous as to proclaim axioms that fall under the first test, for an edifice that falls is apt to displace even the corner-stone upon which it rests.

Here we must distinguish between religious men and men who are not religious. The former are as severe on the faults of women

as on their own, for they consider that in each case sin takes one from God, and hides His image in the soul; but the atheist, the materialist, and the indifferent man, cannot be sincerely severe on weaknesses he profits by, unless they directly harm him. In one word then the modern man—at least in France—does not feel a too great esteem for chastity in women, except in cases where his vanity or jealousy enters into play, and at bottom, this attitude of mind is natural, for how can we require of another that which we fail in ourselves?

Be a woman therefore ever so little intelligent, observing and reflective, she will soon be convinced that it is not in the opinion of men that she will find sanction for purity of life. If she be a really good woman, she will suffer on realizing this fact, and it will be difficult for her to give up an idea that from generation to generation has been transmitted through the feminine mind. But if she holds to her belief in spite of counter evidence, she is building upon shifting sands where fragile edifices are overthrown by a breath of wind.

Fénelon, and those who thought like him, are on the side of truth; woman must be what she wishes to be for herself and for God. It is not on masculine opinion that she can now

rest her conscience, since this opinion, not yet formed, is instinctive, unstable, and consequently not permanent. Sometimes it is even deeply unjust and a demoralizing element, precisely because based upon an imperfect knowledge of women, on past traditions no longer believed, and lastly, on an unconscious and general contempt for feminine personality.

We must cherish no illusions on this subject. The present indulgence of men towards the weakness of woman is often based on cynicism rather than justice. They take, moreover, a certain pleasure in finding women so docile on certain grounds, when they know them to be bold enough to claim the right to hold firm to their own opinions in other fields. Until now the woman's rights movement has not served morally to raise women in the eyes of men; on the contrary, it has done away with the reverence—platonic, however—that has been inspired by the devoted wife and mother.

We are in a new century, and assisting at the perhaps happy début of modifications in the relations between man and woman. By way of preparation, we must clear the road of old errors that obstruct it, and realize certain facts: First, that women still attach great importance to men's opinions; second, that

man does not occupy himself with the moral elevation of his companion—a lost force that could be employed in promoting the happiness of both parties.

Co-education, which has often succeeded so well, not only in certain northern countries, but even in Italy,—where in spite of warm southern blood, there have been no unsatisfactory results,—will teach men to know and understand women better. A familiar and yet serious contact with the opposite sex during childhood and student years, teaches young men to discern shades of feminine character before meeting women in society, where all that is artificial is cultivated at the expense of the natural, and before the first attack of love and the inherent nervousness in this kind of emotion shall have fatally blinded the judgment.

Great prejudice exists against mixed schools, the illogical absurdity of which Marcel Prévost makes very clear in his “*Lettres à Françoise.*” Why is it considered perfectly correct that youth should meet for the first time at some ball, where half dressed young girls are thrown into the arms of young men, and waltzed to the strains of suggestive music, while people find it quite shocking that these same young girls should write their exercises

in a mixed class-room, with no more disturbing element than the voice of a professor of Roman history or geometry, as the case may be.

The growing number of schools and colleges for co-education must finally bring about a general adoption of the system and produce immense advantages. It bestows upon the moral and intellectual personality of a woman, that which she has hitherto never possessed in the opinion of men. If from childhood, for instance, it should become a custom to regard women as thinking creatures, in whose company the apprenticeship to life could be made, this fact alone would exert considerable influence upon the future ordering of the relations between the sexes. Man sadly needs a fuller knowledge of his mate, a conception beyond those feelings of pleasure and happiness which she awakens in him. His ignorance in this respect is great, and while he discourses upon this subject, women smile at his rudimentary knowledge of his own psychology. Some men—this type nowadays is very rare—have made women a special study, but their perspicacity is confined to the things that pertain to love, and the tendencies resulting from it. On this special subject, they are well equipped, although they see effects only,

causes nearly always escaping them. In any case, masculine psychology never goes beyond personal limits; it only analyses the being who loves, and all the intimate and personal life of a woman remains unknown to them.

Men in general—always excepting a religious man who, seeing in every human being an immortal soul, attaches as much importance to a woman's soul as to his own—do not take the trouble to study women from any particular point of view. They accept them as they are, always mistrusting them, and yet inclining to a certain confidence in feminine flattery whose aim is deception. How different is this from the perspicacity of the other sex. A woman may be gifted with slight intelligence and few reasoning qualities, yet she judges another woman correctly; she clearly distinguishes between lights and shadows, while a man sees them in a confused, near-sighted way, without perceiving the zones of light and the obscure places. The feigned has often more influence with him than the real. This fact is especially true in all that pertains to frankness. For a man is not struck by a really straightforward nature, but may be convinced of the loyalty of an untruthful woman, who makes a great show of being sincere.

A very distinguished man said lately, in speaking of a woman he knew, "She never wishes to speak about herself; it amounts to absolute forgetfulness of her own personality." His audience heard him with amazement, for not only was the woman of whom he spoke always in evidence, but was known to confide unnecessarily the most sacred things in her life to strangers. How explain such an illusion in a man of superior intelligence? Simply by his contempt for the "Psyche" in woman. His friend must have spoken before him of her impersonality, and without taking the trouble to observe her further, he, there and then, formed of her a favorable opinion.

Men, let not your pride be up in arms at what I am about to say! While some of your sex have great perspicacity, can analyze everything, and know how to pierce the secrets of a woman's soul, generally speaking, the majority allow themselves to be deceived with singular facility on the tendencies and moral qualities of the daughters of Eve, and precisely because she attaches little importance to them. The day when her qualities are regarded seriously men will pay greater attention to them. Masculine ignorance of women is responsible for the little happiness between the sexes, except

in fugitive moments of emotion. With a deeper knowledge one of the other, the happy would be much happier, and the unhappy would learn perhaps to cultivate it; in any case, fewer disagreeable surprises would result.

Spinoza declares that there is no happiness except in the search for perfection. Those who awaken this desire, and spur it on by their influence, are real makers of joys. A woman should aspire to her own amelioration certainly, both for her own sake and for the glory of God, and when she learns that to be loyal, generous and just, augment her worth in the eyes of the companion of her destiny, she will run with joy on the path that leads to the heights.

Man has a serious mission to fulfil with regard to women, a mission of which he is as yet unconscious. The day when he realizes that his own happiness is in danger, he will awaken to the fact that, in demoralizing women, and in using his influence solely to develop the vanity and vices of his mate, he labors at his own undoing, and thus being a maker of sorrow for her, he risks becoming one for himself.

VIII

WHAT WOMEN THINK OF MEN

There exists in the minds of women a palpable lack of the most abstract emotions—that is, the sentiment of justice—which controls conduct independently of the affections, the sympathies and the antipathies inspired by other individuals.
—*Herbert Spencer.*

If it is unquestionably true that men in general hold a mistaken opinion of women, they declare them to be incomprehensible. Certain scientific men hold physical phenomenon responsible for all psychical manifestations in woman. It is equally true that women commit grave errors in their judgment of men. They consider them subjectively, that is to say, from the worst side, for in their relations with women, men show themselves to the least advantage. Man has created a special code of morals in regard to his wife. While often truthful and loyal with other women, he feels himself free to deceive and lie to her with impunity. To break his word given to another man would be equivalent to dishonor, but to break his word to a woman is looked upon as an amusing thing which the masculine public will applaud, and against which—something

yet more singular—the victims themselves do not revolt.

Every woman resents this insult in her own particular case, but where another is concerned her hereditary state of mind accepts quite naturally the unscrupulous betraying of women by men. Women also sometimes employ the same methods with regard to men, but even the most cunning always feel some scruple or remorse. Thanks to this subjective manner of judging, there exists in the woman's mind, in spite of the immense prestige that man still exercises, a substratum of contempt for him. This contempt exists less in very good women, whose ignorance fosters illusion, but those whose experience of life, of love, and of men, is larger are often relentless in their judgment of the opposite sex. The more degraded a woman is, the greater contempt she has for man, and while he crushes her under the weight of his scorn, she returns his contempt a hundredfold in secret, and this because she only judges him from the point of view of his conduct towards herself.

Women who judge men in general, without foolish illusions, or narrow and one-sided prejudices, are rare. Those who know the weaknesses of men, and at the same time under-

stand the nobler side of their lives, represent such a feeble minority, that one rarely meets them; but in the cause of truth and justice, this small class should become the majority. Mutual happiness would be the result, for this synthetical and just view of man's personality would conduce to establish between the sexes less strained and hostile sentiments, which in the beginning have often been too exalted and too tender.

One remedy alone is efficacious for woman's false judgments, and man's attitude with regard to them,—a better understanding of one another. But this complete knowledge will not be possible, as I said before, without co-education. When man ceases to despise woman intellectually, he will know that should she wish it, she is capable of sharing his studies, of reasoning as logically as he, and consequently his idea of honor in regard to her will be immeasurably modified. And when women in their turn no longer see in men only the seducer, the adorer, the fiancé, or the possible husband, she will learn to recognize his faults and his good qualities in all branches of human activity, in all the manifestations of his sentiments, and will grow juster in her judgments of her companion.

If men and women would learn to regard themselves as beings condemned by an impenetrable mystery to the same tragic destiny, which is—except through the eye of faith—to be ignorant of where we come from, and whither we are going, they would, through pity for each other, cease to measure themselves as with an adversary. If the image of possible love did not unceasingly haunt the imagination, and if this love came unbidden, without being artificially created by an obsession of sentimental and sensual thoughts, it would be more sincere, stronger and fresher, and nothing good and charming in the relations between the sexes would be lost or diminished. Only what is disagreeable and useless would disappear.

The idea of giving a complete and general education to women has at last taken hold of the world. We are far from the time when Pius IX. severely reprimanded Monseigneur Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, for his advanced ideas on the education of young girls. To-day women who wish to participate in those higher branches of study, usually followed by men alone, find the way open before them. They still number only a few, and perhaps this condition of things will remain stationary, many women's minds rebelling at the idea of abstract

work, and the relentless labor demanded by the intellect. It suffices, however, that a chosen few do follow the higher road, thus establishing an equilibrium that will be useful to both sexes.

There are many who still oppose the intellectual development of women: they imagine the result to be a diminution of a woman's charm, abandonment of the hearthstone, and consequent disintegration of the family life. If a woman is beautiful, fascinating, tender, passionate, the fact that she be capable of reading the "Æneid" in the original, will not detract from her charm. Aspasia contended that geometry had taught her to dominate men's hearts. If a woman be ugly, cold, and repelling, ignorance will not embellish her, nor render her more attractive.

As to abandoning the hearthstone, the women of the upper classes, who still cherish that place, are those who reflect, and whose intellectual and artistic pursuits remain at home. Their sisters, who neither read, learn, nor work, are away from their families all day; they run from house to house, from shop to shop, and are seen everywhere, except at their own fireside. Does anybody still believe that the ignorance of the wife or mother suffices to

prevent the disintegration of the family? The contrary can be triumphantly affirmed. If there is anything that will restore all that family life has lost, it will be complete development of the woman. She will then directly acquire a supreme influence over her children, and in a reflex manner over her husband and the other men of her household. When one sees in the fashionable streets of a large city, and in the meeting places of the great world, cohorts of idle women drifting from place to place, their minds quite empty of intellectual occupation, one asks oneself, can their ignorance and frivolity protect them from evil, and what advantage can shallow brains secure in their domestic life?

Formerly, the conditions of life were different: the domestic cares of a household so completely absorbed the mother, especially if her means were limited, that she had no time for the cultivation of her mind. All that is now changed. House linen is no longer woven at home, and material life is facilitated to such an extent, that if a longing for luxury did not create, in the middle classes of society, desires difficult to satisfy, practical cares would sit lightly on our families. These changes, in any case, augment our hours of leisure. Briefly,

then, if homes are abandoned, the intellectual development of women should not be blamed for it; it is rather that her head is turned by love of dress, restlessness, and the pursuit of pleasure. It is this frivolity that takes women away from serious study, that prevents reflection, and urges them on to desert their homes where the husband, sons or brothers are only sure of finding them at meal times, and even then they are often unpunctual.

In the intimacy of family life where an impartial point of view is commonly taken, when women discuss men, the men are often surprised to learn how unformed are the judgments of women, and how unstable is the basis of the arguments put forth by them. Their opinions are subjective to the point of revelations, and easily give a key to the whole range of feminine feeling. If the woman herself be not in question, the fate of a sister, or intimate friend, is sure to be the subject under discussion; rarely is a general view taken of the question. Within the narrow circle where her thoughts range, however, woman, though often failing in justice, gives evidence on certain points of an astonishing perspicacity and a singular delicacy of intuition. Her natural instincts rarely betray her, and in dis-

covering certain wrong-doings she is superior to any criminal judge. But she scents evil *en bloc*, attributing to all men the faults of the few, and refusing to admit that the guilty have certain rehabilitating qualities. If a man has wounded her feelings or prejudices, that effaces all that is noble and generous in her conception of his character.

Measuring everything as it affects herself is a mental habit peculiar to woman, and, generally speaking, she does not base her friendships on merit or character, but upon the kindness or amiability shown to her. This tendency of the feminine mind is seen in social relationships, but especially with regard to men. Thus we often hear the very virtuous break a lance in behalf of some particular person, solely on the ground of principle, but, should their feelings or vanity be ever so slightly wounded, they obstinately close their eyes to all merit or standing. Because men commit one fault is it necessary that they should fail in all things? An inconstant man, or unfaithful husband, is often an excellent father, and a good citizen; and to regard him with contempt is not just, any more than it would be just to apply a one-sided judgment to woman.

Sometimes, however, we meet with an exception to the prevailing rule, and in such cases, no judgment carries more weight than that of an intelligent, far-seeing, experienced and just woman. She can seize upon every detail of a character, analyze it in its most intimate shadings, discerning clearly the lights and shadows. Men judge with their reason and intelligence only; women add intuition to reason, and then pass the judgment through the sieve of their hearts where it is softened and sweetened. But in order to judge it is necessary to be impersonal and this quality is rare in women; it does not follow, however, that men always practise this quality in greater degree, but because of habits acquired in a wider sphere, the quality naturally becomes more apparent in them.

Even in middle life, when vanity is on the wane, a woman in her views remains always subjective, and she must possess a great heart and a strong intellect, united to a profound comprehension of life, to be objective and just in forming opinions. Generally speaking, she does not consider man as a being, destined before everything else, to accomplish his own evolution and lead his own life, but a creature made to adore, protect and serve her. The

man who plays the part of devoted slave to a woman presents a pathetic spectacle. He appears as the model man *par excellence*. Women cite him as an example to their husbands and sons, and yet they feel free to laugh at his attitude of devotion. We are now speaking only of women belonging to the upper classes, for, to the women of the common people, men are often brutal masters, whose slaves women often are, either willingly or by force. The best husbands among them are little inclined to satisfy the caprices of their wives.

The influence of American women has largely contributed to develop, in the minds of certain European women, an idea that the object of a husband's or a father's life, is to put in evidence the woman's personality, equipping her with all the arms that insure victory. Is it not right, we are asked, that the man should work to adorn the woman, and show her off to the best advantage, allowing her to develop all the instincts of coquetry and elegance? He plays his rôle, however, by sacrificing himself for her; and she hers by accepting his sacrifice; consequently she owes to her lord, neither gratitude nor deference.

This idea seems to me to work harm to the primitive idea of man and his helpmate. In

Europe, and especially in Latin countries, the mentality of a woman has not been influenced to the same degree as in America, notwithstanding the fact, that a woman imagines she is the sunshine of a man's life, and alas! believes this too sincerely for her own happiness. A clever Italian critic recently wrote, "it is a ray of sunshine we would willingly dispense with at certain moments."

This sally, although brutal, possesses a grain of truth. The modern man does not seek the modern woman for her morals and intellect as much as she imagines, and this, just because in general he esteems neither her mind nor her character and can well do without her in his social relations. Woman must reconquer her ancient prestige, or acquire an ascendancy of a new order. She will never succeed in this if she deludes herself with false illusions as to the importance of the place she occupies in the psychology of the men of the twentieth century.

It would be wiser for her to open her eyes and understand that the mere fact of being the mother no longer suffices to exert influence on her children; nor does the fact of being a wife secure a husband's love. The necessity of meriting the place she wishes to occupy must,

little by little, be borne in upon her intelligence. She is apt to think herself a queen by divine right, but her crown is very insecurely worn. Even the women who feel the most secure of theirs, are forced to give up the old system, and seek new points of resistance against the destructive wave that is overwhelming them to-day.

If women find little encouragement from men in the development of their nobler qualities, men also rarely find in their life's companions the inspiration that urges them on to great things. Woman belongs by instinct to the Empiric School; she sees in everything the apparent and the practical results—money, position, honor. All these she values and appreciates; consequently she honors the man who can procure them in order to promote the pleasure and happiness of his family. She seldom sees beyond. Character and integrity, generally speaking, are for her a secondary consideration. There exists undoubtedly women who would sacrifice everything, rather than see their husbands, sons, or brothers stoop to any dishonorable compromise, but we all know that delicate consciences are the exception.

The average woman, even a good woman, does not like to look too closely into things.

She prefers to enjoy the goods the gods provide without asking from whence they come. This wilful and interested blindness is often the cause of certain catastrophes that ruin many families. These considerations make it plainly evident that men and women value one another's souls too lightly. They will commit crimes, the result of passion. Murder and suicide from love are alarmingly on the increase. They care little about the life of the soul and mutually disregard it.

Some women, it is true, have kept their illusions about men, and they are apt to carry their credulity too far. Not only do they in everything submit to masculine influence, esteeming man's point of view superior to their own, giving great weight to his opinions, but they refuse to recognize a man's weakness or vices. While these foolishly trusting women are on the decrease, they undoubtedly still exist. Their system might make for happiness, if happiness were to be found outside of realities, or in the splendor of a mirage. I do not think this can be so, for it seems to me that in everything stable truth is the one remedy in life. The greater part of the misunderstandings that sadden and embitter relations between men and women, have their source, as I have often

said, in an incomplete knowledge of one another.

If they would learn above all things to consider themselves social beings, destined to live their own lives, and accomplish their evolution, independent of whatever ties of affection may unite them in a more or less permanent manner, they would become, one for the other, makers of joy, and less frequently, than now, makers of sorrow.

There are people who live like brutes, finding satisfaction only in material things, regarding all that prevents them from satisfying their animal tastes as misfortunes. “*Non ragionam di loro, ma guarda e passa.*” But any one who can think and feel, and who has dreamed of happiness, knows that the incompleteness and the bitterness of many lives is due to some disillusion in love. When disillusion occurs after marriage, its effects are more serious and lasting, but always and in every condition of life, disillusion is an artisan of suffering. The influence of the sexes on each other is immense, for sorrow or for joy, and in the same measure for good or evil. If from childhood men were taught to honor certain intellectual and moral qualities in women,

as I said in the preceding chapter, this attitude would contribute most efficaciously towards their development, leaving them still free to love a woman who did not possess these qualities. Would these mental and moral attainments detract from the physical charm? If men reflected, would they not perhaps be glad to see these qualities in the mother of their children, since they contribute to the well-being of domestic life, to the dignity of the household, and to that outward respectability which is still the best policy to pursue in order to attain success in life.

We have seen in the preceding chapters that men in general give little weight to a woman's opinion. This is humiliating, although sometimes merited, for she is often known to say foolish things. She thinks that to be illogical gives her an added charm, and that an unreasonable and childish way of talking is attractive. But in this she is mistaken. We all know intelligent and cultivated women, who amuse themselves by an affectation of absurd ways of thinking—false sentimentality, false reasoning,—and who are incoherent about and on every subject. In youth this is amusing and we laugh. Later on it ceases to be amusing

and becomes ridiculous. Women lose in this way all authority, and hence should be convinced that common sense, moderation, goodness and wisdom are the only charms in maturity.

If men feel contempt for women's judgments women take their revenge by despising men. Adored sometimes, sought after always, feared often, admired intellectually, the greater number of experienced women, nevertheless, esteem men lightly, and between themselves, when sure of not being overheard, speak of them in a way that approaches alarmingly near contempt. By obstinately refusing to consider men from every point of view, and by persistently regarding them only in relation to themselves, women are most unjust. It must, however, be admitted that often these reprisals are merited, and the misfortune is that men do not realize this fact.

Conscious only of their own prestige, they do not perceive that this prestige is not supported by esteem. They are incapable of self-criticism. A woman is more subtle, more intuitive and is conscious, even in the adoration a man gives her, of the little regard he feels for her as an independent personality. A man scarcely ever discloses this want of regard for

the mother, however. Here again he lacks perspicacity, for he does not discern the spirit of the letter, and does not discriminate when confronted with the maternal relation, which is all tenderness in spite of its most animal manifestations. The sacred name of mother dignifies in his eyes even women who have dishonored the title and lost all right to wear it.

The woman of the eighteenth century enjoyed far greater knowledge of men than have her sisters of the nineteenth. That was her special science, say the De Goncourt brothers, She became known for her aptitude, for her fine and delicate nature, and the general temper of her time became almost universal in her sex, where were revealed its hidden depth and value. Perhaps the men of that day, more susceptible to the attractions of these delightfully intuitive natures, studied them more thoroughly. The nineteenth century, more serious, practical, and ignorant of cultured leisure, dulled delicacy of perception in both sexes. A voyage of mutual discovery has become indispensable, and I should like to see it undertaken by minds that are just and hearts that are sincere.

For some, this voyage is unnecessary,—those living souls, under proper direction, who

class in its proper place each thing and each sentiment. But precursors of better times are rare: the majority of men and women persevere in old errors when certain new ideas press upon them more and more. In the struggle for existence, man sees in woman only a frivolous being that he has no time to study. The woman on her side is irritated because she no longer finds in man the adoring slave described in the romances of a former period. She wishes to enter the arena with him in other fields, in order to lead him back through love to the chivalry of the golden age. This wish can never be realized. There are no idlers to-day, and there will be fewer still as time goes on, for to consecrate long hours to women's society requires the leisure that modern life forbids. Hence women must conquer in another way.

Men and women must modify the very foundations of their thoughts. Men must enlarge their ideas of woman and esteem her as they would a fellow man who merits their good opinion. Women on their side, will regain the esteem in which they once held man, when they see that he appreciates in her something besides an instrument of pleasure or utility.

For some it is already too late, so deeply

sunk are they in the morass of false judgment and sex prejudice; but to the youth of to-day, our children, the destined men and women of to-morrow, the future looks. To them must be shown the way that will lead future generations towards a relatively happy life, where men and women, true comrades at last, delivered from time honored misunderstandings, will follow the paths leading to the fertile valleys and lofty summits that dominate the world.

IX

MAKERS OF JOY

“He who, doing what he ought, gives pleasure to others, shall find joy in the other world.”—*Imitation of Boudha.*

The super-man, or rather the superior man, —I use the term in its greatest and truest acceptation, not in the absurd sense, in which certain recent schools and plagiarists employ it,—should be everywhere and always a maker of joy. To commit selfish, bad, or unworthy actions, of which the most vulgar beings are also capable, and to be proud of such acts, does not constitute superiority; neither does an esthetic exterior or graceful manner establish superiority. All truly great men have been altruists, even celebrated conquerors; conquest being a sort of altruism *sui generis*, an effort to enrich national patrimony by adding additional territory to possessions already held. Not that the spirit of territorial conquest is laudable in itself, but because the conqueror who acquires it occupies himself di-

rectly with his neighbor's well-being. He sacrifices many lives, it is true, but, if victorious, he augments the moral and material welfare of his subjects. He may even cherish the illusion, should the vanquished be barbarians or backwood nations, that he has brought to them the beneficent influences of civilization.

A man of talent and ability, preoccupied with personal fame and pleasure, cannot be considered a great man; for, to be subjective, is always degrading and limits the growth of ideas. The true genius has an extraordinary force of expansion; for he rises above his own personality; but should he grow self-centered, though he be brilliant, trenchant, and elegant, he will lack force, be small in his nature, and all the magic of a creative imagination, or an eloquent pen, will never mask this fact for long. Putting aside the ancient poets, it was Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe, who made humanity their object. Dante saw God reflected in the human race; it was sinful forms of humanity that he lamented and punished, but he admired and revered every form that is elevated and pure. The greatest minds rarely speak or write about themselves, and

their personalities only enter indirectly and secondarily, into their philosophy, drama, or verse.

What would we think of a sculptor or painter who, either with his chisel or brush, perpetually reproduced his own image, or the scenes of his personal life? Whatever his apparent value might be, he would be regarded as vain and puerile. If the great painters of the Renaissance sometimes reproduced in a work their own features, the figure was always one of a group in the background of the picture. The same rule applies to the intellectual world. To work for oneself, and not in view of or for the benefit of others, is to quench the divine fire, and no one, however brilliantly his false fame may scintillate, can escape this unalterable law.

Hence, the modern theory of practising art for art's sake alone must be condemned. The author of the Parthenon frieze did not intend to make an ethical study of his sculptures. Every work of beauty becomes a moral influence through its perfection. Phidias has won his place among great men and benefactors of humanity, having ever been in Greek eyes a "maker of joy." Even after the lapse

of so many centuries, the ruins of his temples are still a delight to look upon.

But if one can only merit this title of Superman by a genial expansiveness radiating around one's well-being, hope, happiness, and even fame, it is not necessary to be a great man in order to be a maker of joy. The humblest and most modest can aspire to this office. Lack of fortune often excludes large gifts of money, but there are many little attentions prompted by the heart that give more pleasure than sumptuous and expensive gifts.

One of my friends in Rome once accompanied a physician of her acquaintance on a visit to one of the poorest quarters of the city. Suddenly, in a lane leading to this crowded district, she saw a poorly clad woman emerge from behind a tree where she had been hiding, and hand the doctor a little bunch of fresh violets. The doctor accepted the flowers in silence, smiled, fastening them in his buttonhole as indifferently as if accomplishing any ordinary daily act of existence, and gave the woman nothing in return. The woman fled and my friend, astonished at the doctor's lack of generosity, wanted to follow the poor creature and recompense her with a few pennies, but her companion stopped her.

“You shall offend her,” he said, and when my friend insisted upon an explanation of the little scene, the Doctor related how, during an epidemic of diphtheria, he had the happiness of saving the life of the poor woman’s child. Great was the rejoicing in her miserable family, but there was no money to pay the physician, and, wishing to show her gratitude, the grateful mother rose every day at dawn to gather the first violets. Her flowers gathered, she waited until he came that she might slip the bouquet into the hands that saved the life of her child. At first the doctor wished to pay for the flowers, but at her look of reproach he replaced the money in his pocket, and never again offered it. “I would not dare,” he murmured with emotion, tenderly taking out the violets the better to arrange them in his buttonhole. My friend asked: “These flowers give you real pleasure?” “Indeed yes, they are like little rays of sunshine that warm me,” replied the doctor. If we thought more of the little sunbeams wherewith to brighten many a poor life, the sum of joys in the world would be increased, and an equilibrium established, for in the past the sorrows of life have largely outweighed the joys.

But in order to give pleasure to others we must first rejoice in our own souls, and this part of our education has hitherto been sadly neglected. Surrounded by sources of pleasure, we are ignorant of how to discover or enjoy them. To learn to feel and taste the beauty and poetry of things, is a science requiring study. Every one of us has experienced this more or less. A certain aspect, that formerly left us unmoved, suddenly becomes dear to us. And why? Because, by closer study, we have perceived its charm. Love of nature, for example, is not always spontaneous. It is often born while reading the poets who have sung its praises, by observing its marvels, or through the cultivation of certain natural tendencies and faculties belonging to our intelligence.

Many people find nature beautiful, but silent and cold. These have not entered into communion with her; they do not hear her many voices. The spirit of her waters, of her forests, and mountains never speaks to them. They see the outward expression of her many forms, but the great secret of the firmament by night is from them withheld. They know not the joy that is to be found in the contemplation

of the universe; hence they can neither teach others this joy nor invite them to participate in it.

Teachers who do not know and love nature, should never be assigned to the young. The instruction they give is necessarily incomplete; they neglect to teach a child the serene and pure joys that lie within the reach and taste of all men. I have seen people kiss the prairie grass, on seeing it again after a long absence. These same people feel on mountain heights an intoxication of joy and an emotion that is perhaps the strongest they have ever experienced.

How many men are ignorant of the great book of nature, or have only lightly turned its leaves, so absorbed are they in the little incidents of everyday life. We see them passing almost automatically through the most beautiful scene, occupied in calculating the number of kilometers they have traveled, discussing hours of departure and of arrival; while their souls remained dead to the delicious freshness of the hidden forest brooks, and deaf to the voice of the wind that speaks to them from heights of eternal snow. To develop in oneself and in others a profound love of nature, poetry, and art, and the faculty of perceiving beauty in everything, is to be a

maker of joy. To read the poets means nothing; their thoughts must sink into our hearts and souls, leaving their imprint and must ever be present in our minds, for us to apply their manner of seeing and feeling to the things that we see and hear. But generally we are not conscious of these analogies. How many readers of Virgil recall the lines in his "Bucolics" about looking over fields of golden grain.

All Italians know Dante, call him the Divine Poet and are justly proud of owning him. But he is a source of joy to the few only; to those rare minds who endeavor to identify their thoughts with his, and seek, in his often obscure words, a hidden sense; who, forgetting their scepticism, long to create within themselves a strong religious soul, capable of understanding the magnificent violence of the poet, and follow him through the abstract subtleties of the metaphysics of the Middle Ages.

The same considerations apply to two other forms of beauty—music and art; but to develop a real love of these we must possess special gifts, particularly for music, which requires, to love and understand it, a very special sense. Those who do not possess this gift, but whose

consciousness of the general harmony of things gives them an intuition of what they lose, understand that music opens to its devotees an unknown world, a world of varied and delicious rhythm, a source of subtle and exquisite joys. But here also is a mine that must be worked before it yields the golden ore.

A taste for the beautiful in architecture, sculpture and painting, altho requiring certain special dispositions, is more within reach of us all! Unlike music this can be artificially cultivated and become a source of intense pleasure. If the pursuit should be accompanied by wide artistic culture, capable of establishing comparisons and relations between epochs, schools, and artists themselves, the satisfaction this can give surpasses the mere pleasure of the eye, and becomes an intellectual enjoyment. A thorough knowledge of the successive stages of art permits one to see in a monument, statue, or picture beauties hidden from the untrained eye, and cherished as doubly precious in so much as they are absolutely our own personal discovery. Intelligent educators should take a deeper interest, following the example of Ruskin and other apostles of the esthetic, in developing a taste for beauty as a source of joy. Their pupils

also, arrived at an age of discretion, should aid them in this task, in order to secure for themselves an inexhaustible source of pleasure. Unfortunately the modern mind is so directed toward material things that it neglects lasting satisfactions, seeking out those that are fugitive, ordinary and vulgar.

It is, therefore, by seeking real joys, and struggling against false ones, that we invite the cooperation of the valiant and sincere. We must convince ourselves that, to create happiness within and around us is the first duty of a man who understands the true meaning of the sacred mission confided to him by God. The more truly a man belongs to the elect, and is a depository of precious forces, the more will he be required generously to distribute his gifts. Nietzsche traces a distinction between the moral sense of a master and his slave, and in this he is right to a certain extent. A master should have a higher moral sense than his slave, as all superiority imposes an obligation of being good, compassionate and just in a higher degree than our inferiors.

If it is every man's duty to be a maker of joy in the measure of his capacity, for the privileged ones of life, this duty becomes imperative. When we realize that we are chil-

dren of a common father, brotherly love is the corollary, and when this father has heaped favors upon us, it becomes an imperative need of the heart and conscience to divide our gifts with others.

In order to become a maker of joy, we must first cease to be makers of sorrow, by avoiding in every possible way all that can bring unnecessary suffering into the lives of others. But some will object that men will then cease to be active and will resemble Hindus who fear at every step to crush an insect. I have said once before that, to avoid causing another suffering, does not imply falling into a state of affectation and childishness. Certain sorrows are necessary and indispensable. There are chastisements that save, harshnesses that are made up of justice, intelligence and goodness, whose result is happiness, just as there exists a pernicious indulgence which is destructive to the welfare of its recipient.

But in order that harsh measures may prove effective, they should be controlled by the heart, approved by reason, and never instigated by bad humor or impatience. A woman who played a great rôle in the history of the Italian Risorgimento said: "When we wish to punish a child, we should first search for a

switch. The time we tarry allows our anger to cool; we can then reason with ourselves, and if after that we administer punishment we may feel assured that it is merited."

I am not speaking of occasions when severity is the result of pure wickedness and meanness, even tho this often happens, "man being," says Schopenhauer, "the only animal that makes another suffer for the pleasure of seeing him suffer." I will limit myself to those impulses which incline certain characters to torment their neighbor without really wishing to harm him, as a vent to their spleen, and a parade of their authority.

Many people say, "We should like to dispense happiness, but how can this be done? We do not know." Any idea of reflecting for a moment and discovering how they may give others pleasure alarms their sluggishness. Some one has said, "thinking is just what nobody wishes to do." These words hold the explanation of the insufficiency and mediocrity of human existence, for truly nobody wants to reflect. How many, even intelligent men and women, live without ever performing this function, for reflection represents an operation much more profound and complex than that of merely arranging in our minds material

and intellectual facts necessary to the fulfilment of social duties. If we really wish to ameliorate and sweeten the lives of others, the first resolution to take is not to poison their existence by perpetual lamentations.

How many really good and well meaning people sadden the lives of those about them by this deplorable habit. They complain of every one and every thing, and their grievances are without number. Very often they possess everything to make them happy and yet they are never satisfied; the slightest cloud suffices to hide from them the sun, and trifles that another would not perceive affect their temper. In their family life they never speak but to utter complaints and listen to them. One would think they were the only people in the world who feel heat and cold, discomforts and contradictions. Intense selfishness is evidently the cause of this manner of accepting and understanding life.

I know families whose lives are passed in monotonous and joyless days, because a husband or wife, father or mother, brother or sister, has contracted the habit of complaining and bemoaning fate. Sometimes this self-indulgence in depressing moods results in the revolt, and consequent disintegration, of the

family. Patient and affectionate characters do not rebel; they submit to a painful burden unjustly imposed upon them, but they grow sad under it, lose their energy, and, for them, the joy of life has fled. I ask, is it just that one human being should lean with all his weight upon the existence of others? If he have a conscience, why does it not speak? Simply because it is not accustomed to be interrogated. Hence, to be a maker of joy we must, in the first place, cease childish complaints, be brave, despising the little contradictions of life, and carry our real crosses with courage and serenity. The great masters of ancient philosophy, as well as the Christian religion, teach this lesson, and they who have neither learned nor accepted it, will never mount the ladder that leads to serene heights; neither will they be a source of joy to others, or an influence that inspires effort. If, in order to find happiness in love, we must learn to respect love, it is equally necessary to respect another's happiness as we do our own.

A false morality and a false idea of religion have in the past, transformed virtue into something austere and morose, and the harm thus accomplished can never be measured. It has estranged the heart from virtue, and a false

opposition between goodness and pleasure has wielded an unfortunate influence on many souls. It is true that our destiny in this life is to suffer, but to revolt against the inevitable, and perhaps salutary, law of suffering is useless and the height of folly. In the early days of creation, before the mysterious tragedy left its ineffaceable traces upon the sons of Adam, we were formed for happiness and our hearts that are filled with this inextinguishable longing to be happy, are the witnesses to this truth. Moreover, we must respect the longing that nature has implanted within us as an indication of our origin; for it remains the sole connecting link with a better and higher existence. Our most insignificant joys ought to be respected, and we should be careful not to sadden or diminish them, unless absurd, foolish or dangerous. But generally speaking, people are indifferent to the contentment and happiness of others, and in families there is always some member ready to assume the rôle of kill-joy, either withholding a permission demanded until the last moment, threatening to retract, or giving it with so many reproaches and recommendations that the pleasure expected is spoiled, even in anticipation.

The capricious practise another method, employing this frequently to poison their neighbors' joy. A party is arranged for the theater, a walk, a drive or a little excursion. At the last moment the capricious member of the family says "I will not go," without giving any good reason; she has changed her mind. *Voilà tout*, she spoils without scruple the pleasure of her companions; forgetting certain conditions that she has made when the party was first suggested, and knowing that everything has been arranged in order to satisfy her whims. A little thing some will say. Not at all. A joy filched from poor human beings destined to suffer so much, is a theft. In any case, it is a useless cruelty, even without taking into account how disagreeable conduct creates in the hearts of those around us an inevitable feeling of irritation. But not to cause unnecessary suffering, and scrupulously to respect the few joys, that Providence allots to men does not suffice. To accomplish the duty of brotherly love, imposed upon some by belief in a common Father, imposed upon others by certain humanitarian doctrines, some more direct action is required. We must efficaciously intervene in the life of our neighbor and learn to be for him a maker of joy.

Have you known any maker of joy? I have met several in my life, and am convinced that the continuation of the human race is due to them. Without the smiles they have called forth, the songs that rise in hearts they have cheered, and the radiance they diffuse into the lives of others, the sun would have long ceased to shine on a world sunk in sadness and gloom; the earth would have grown cold, and the last shivering man would have expired. They alone have saved us, and will continue to save us. Happily they are more numerous than the "ten just men" whom the Almighty demanded of Sodom and Gomorrah, to save those two cities from destruction by fire and brimstone.

There are makers of joy from instinct and will, and when the two forces of instinct and will combine, the result is a glorious and beneficent man or woman. They who belong to this class of humanity are the most agreeable and sympathetic people in the world. They exercise an almost universal attraction, unconsciously drawing to them many, who feel less unhappy in their presence. They always inspire hope and in any case, a sensation of well-being and pleasure radiates from them, cheering hearts, and lightening for a moment the weight of the heaviest burden.

But joys procured by instinct are not always well chosen; they sometimes satisfy dangerous desires and aspirations, of which the final result is often trouble and anguish. To give another happiness represents at times, to those urged on by this desire, a great and dangerous temptation. This particular point is susceptible of large development, but discussion of the subject does not enter into the object of this book. Hence I only allude to the weaknesses of passion, that in our desire to please others, incline us to look with too great indulgence upon a whole series of concessions and compromises we are tempted to make, in order to insure the happiness of those we love. Pure instincts are then to be feared, even in the blessed category of makers of joy.

However, we can only believe that to them much will be pardoned, even if they have erred much, for under their weaknesses and sins are hidden the warm impulses of fraternity, an ardent desire to dry humanity's tears and bring back smiles to those bereft of joy. After instinctive makers of joy, come they who bring happiness to others through good-will. They are not always the most charming, but they are the most to be admired. Often they have to struggle against a nature that may be violent,

impatient and irritable, and that they have to conquer step by step in order to become gentle, indulgent and a dispenser of smiles. At times we feel the effort made under their soft speech, and behind their encouraging smile, in the services they render us to be trying. But they possess what the instinctive lacks,—a sense of proportion, the art of distinguishing false from true joys, and therefore do not fall into a weak compliance with things that are dangerous.

The third class includes privileged beings who, having been created to give happiness, add instinct to reason and good-will, and constitute what is best and most perfect in human nature. Contact with them diffuses a warmth and light that penetrates the heart. Often these makers of joy, only touch lightly our souls; they can neither change nor determine our destiny, but they can help us to support it. A look, a smile, a grasp of the hand in a dark hour, suffices to revive courage, for silent sympathy is also a powerful arm, enveloping and warming us. We are most sensitive to its influence, for speech cannot always convey what we mean or would wish to say. When this subtle, silent intercourse exists between beings united by the tie of blood, friendship

or love, their mutual influence for happiness is even greater, for then the very conditions of existence can be transformed.

To have near you one whose sole preoccupation is to give you joy, who always receives you with a smile, who is ready to sympathize with your troubles and sorrows; rejoice in your success, rouse you to fresh hopes; whose manner is all brightness and whose thoughts are courageous and true,—that is real happiness. While, on the contrary, how often do we not tremble when we think of how our family will receive the news of some mistake or failure, for we know that instead of lightening the weight of our misfortune, they will press it down more heavily upon our shoulders. We rarely find, in one individual, strength, sweetness and the optimism of which I have just spoken, but we can all spread a little joy, at least here and there. We can all speak the comforting word that gives courage to the weak; we can all restore faith in themselves to those who have lost it. We can cheer the discouraged and give them, at least for a moment, a gleam of contentment; for a little praise falls like beneficent dew on the heart.

I do not mean by that to advocate cleverly directed flattery, which being founded upon

falsehood, depraves both the soul that practises it and the soul that accepts it. But one can say agreeable things and yet be truthful, for nearly every one has some physical, moral, or mental quality, that we can admire without being false. We have only to look for these qualities and to add to our observations a little kindness and pity. This subject I shall refer to again later on.*

Makers of joy find a large field of action in the material world also. If we lent a helping hand more frequently to our neighbor, offering him in a spirit of brotherly love means that might start him in life again, without making other sacrifices than that of our persevering efforts and tireless good-will on his behalf, there would be fewer tears and bitter hearts in a world, wherein the image of God is effaced. We overlook also the little attentions that are a source of so much joy. Life is made up of little things, and the charm of an amiable or gracious thought, that shows itself in the little nothings of daily life, is a powerful and sweet influence. The busy, practical modern woman has forgotten the art of little attentions. I know, however, the last representative of the

* See chapter on "Woman the Comforter."

old order, and I ask is it in her sleeping, or in her waking moments, that the desire to be agreeable to others is transformed in her brain into ingenious ideas? She studies the tastes of others and tries to satisfy them morally and materially. She knows their sacred trials and brings them hope and courage. Her noble and tender thoughts, her delicate and caressing ways have awakened in more than one life an ideal hitherto lacking. She is excessively slight and fragile, her serene face is crowned with white hair; no one dreams of asking her age, for all feel that eternal youth lives in her heart. Others have perhaps performed deeds of heroism, but she has given joy.

The influence exercised by kind words from certain people cannot be measured. I have in mind a retiring, modest man, singular in aspect and manner, who every Sunday visited the house of a friend where the head of the family, a superior man of great position, always bade him "Good-evening" and kindly asked after his health. His simple words were so valued by this lonely man that when his friend died and he could no longer receive his kindly greeting, he left his employment and the city, dying in his turn of sorrow, in some obscure and unknown place where he had sought

refuge. Numerous examples of this kind could be cited to prove the unconscious influence that men exercise over one another. Of this I will speak in a following chapter.

In any case, a little reflection suffices to convince us that, be it in the moral or material order, we too often neglect opportunities of bringing happiness into other lives. Holy Scripture says it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. This seems hard and unjust. Are riches then a malediction? On the contrary, wealth is an immense privilege, since it enables us to bring so much joy into other lives. To withhold money is the crime, for with money we can not only relieve the poor, cloth the naked and feed the hungry, but we can brighten and ameliorate lives whose least pleasure is often obtained at the price of hard and painful effort. It is not, however, necessary to be rich, in order to develop the element of joy in ourselves and in others. One of the profoundest sources of joy resides in a sentiment much neglected in the hurry of modern life, but containing in itself elements of great pleasure and consolation; I mean friendship.

X

FRIENDSHIP

Sans vertu, l'amitié ne peut exister, et, sauf la vertu, rien n'est supérieur à l'amitié.—*Cicero*.

Le plus beau présent qui ait été fait aux hommes après la sagesse, c'est l'amitié.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

Never as now has a word been so much abused as "friendship" and never perhaps have we been so far from its real meaning. Listen to the conversations of men and women to-day, and observe with what facility they use it. All relations, whether based upon worldly or business considerations, are designated under this name. The habit is so general that, although recognizing its absurdity, we all alike participate in abuse of the term. Hence its true meaning must be reserved for the elect few in whose inner life the tie of this secret affinity—which is not love—exercises a decided influence.

The companion, the confrère, the colleague, have come to be called "friends," precisely because everywhere, and in all relationships, the true friend is absent. Snobbishness has played a large part in this exaggerated appli-

cation of the word friendship, for it pleases certain people to designate under the name of friends simple acquaintances whose social position flatters their vanity. When off their guard in conversation, they speak of Mr. X. as "my friend," or of Mrs. Z. as "such a good friend of mine." If Mr. X. and Mrs. Z. heard these words they would be surprised, no doubt, to learn that they were considered intimate with people whom they scarcely knew. But generally speaking people do not hear, and so the desired effect is produced. In every age the same thing has occurred. Through the centuries, power and celebrity have had singular attraction for mankind. The following four lines have been attributed to Pius II. (Enea Piccolomini):

Quando mi chiamavo Enea
Nessun mi conosceva;
Ora che sono Pio,
Tutti mi vogliono zio!

Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun," which is true, but there are certain tendencies, products of the age in which we live, that become accentuated or diminished, and there are different ways of understanding life, and of feeling certain things. Our period is one that vulgarizes everything,—a fact admitted by most modern thinkers. In the artis-

tic trades, even beautiful and rare work is immediately reproduced in cheap ugly imitations. The design on a material costing two pounds a yard is used for a cheap stuff sold at two-pence. Even famous pictures are not respected, and the chromo has rendered almost odious the masterpieces it copies. The music box and phonograph have accomplished equally sad results in music and song.

Happily Creation escapes the general degeneracy of things; but once delivered into the hands of man, what would he not make of it? Wherever possible, he disfigures or soils it, as if the ungraceful and ordinary were his ideal. From the utilitarian point of view, he gets all he can from nature, and to his efforts in this direction we owe the comforts and conveniences of modern life. But he concerns himself little about what is beautiful, noble or great, and if he meets with the beautiful and great in life, he wishes to reduce them to a fraction and make of them a marketable commodity. At the base of this vulgarization and this parceling out lies the utopian idea of equality.

What happens with material works is reflected in the spiritual. The number of our ordinary acquaintances is enlarged in a pro-

digious manner by the superficial life we lead, and by travel. If we could prove by statistics the number of acquaintances a man had fifty years ago, and those which the modern man has, the difference would be enormous. The tendency is everywhere to enlarge one's circle—ambitious people with discernment, but the foolish, blindly without any interest or inclination to guide them. I once heard a woman announce with pride, "I have 2,000 visits to make this winter." She flaunted this fact before her less favored friends, who had only 1,000 names on their visiting lists. Could there be anything more futile than this thirst for increasing one's bowing acquaintances? What useless ballast are these interminable lists, in which no place is left for an hour's intelligent or affectionate intercourse. The habit of going from drawing-room to drawing-room gives certain persons a style in conversation that is as flat as a well-dressed stone,—not one spontaneous word in it, not an angle, not a defined form! This class have no need of friends; they only want playfellows who can be constantly changed.

People steeped in worldliness—convicts of pleasure—require companions of the ball and chain, with whom they can dance everywhere

the international merry-go-round. They are bored and irritated by whatever demands reflection or patience. To be obliged to occupy themselves for a friend becomes to them forced labor.

An exchange of light talk, each going in for the same sport, amply suffices for the ordinary social relationships; and anything of a more intimate nature where deeper and more passionate feelings are not concerned, seems to many, exaggerated sentiment scarcely pardonable in a school girl; who, while awaiting marriage, pours out her overflowing heart to a companion of the class-room, or to a young boy ignorant of life, who takes his Cicero seriously. Later in life, when they become men and women, pleasure or personal interest alone will weigh with them, and they will laugh at the simplicity of their youth.

This disregard for friendship is found in good people of a practical turn of mind. They admit that friends and connections are useful, but affection between people without the tie of a common interest, is to their way of thinking quite superfluous. Without counting other members of their family, husband and chil-

dren amply fill their hearts, and they find in a large circle of acquaintances distractions that are more useful and varied than friendships.

Few people express themselves with such brutal frankness, but this manner of thinking is common among a large number of people. It is often the result of selfishness and mediocrity; but it is also in certain generous natures, a desire to give of themselves, to be like St. Paul, "all things to all men," fearing to concentrate themselves on exclusive affections. It seems to me that it is possible to reconcile both, for there is a place in life for profound and intimate friendship, without diminishing our interest in those who have been dealt harshly with by fate, and who consequently have need of us.

Those who do not understand friendship, who neither feel nor inspire it, are the paupers of the moral world. They may experience all the satisfaction of gratified vanity, all the joys of love, but something is lacking in the apparent fullness of their lives, since the only disinterested sentiment that man is capable of feeling is a stranger to their hearts; hence the rare joy that flows from it is unknown to them.

Friendship was better understood and meant more in the Pagan than in the Christian world. Since the coming of Christ it has been replaced by love. Woman was morally uplifted by Christianity, and men now feel a higher affection for her, and make of her the confidante of their thoughts. In ancient Greece, where a woman was only regarded as an instrument for voluptuousness, the heart of the hero and philosopher necessarily turned towards friendship. The Greek legend is, in fact, nothing more than a hymn to this sentiment, to which altars were erected in Athens and afterwards in Rome.

The Greek idea of friendship is represented by the figure of a girl, with uncovered head; one hand on her heart, the other resting on an Elm struck by a thunderbolt, and about which, a vine, heavy with grapes, is entwined. Her dress was high and close fitting, her attitude chaste. The Roman conception of friendship was more complicated and modern. The girl's dress was cut *à la vierge*, her head crowned with myrtle and pomegranate flowers; she held in her hand two hearts enchained. On the fringe of her tunic was written, "Life and death;" on her forehead were the words, "Summer and Winter." With her right hand

she pointed to her left side; exposed over her head and on it was written: "From far and near."

We all know how rich was antiquity in examples of friendship; needless to enumerate them here; they are known to every schoolboy. Cicero's treatise on friendship gives the measure of what the ancients intended by this sacred affection, which requires a strong, serene, and above all, an independent soul. The snobs and neurasthenics of to-day are evidently incapable of this sentiment. No more altars are erected to what Pythagoras calls the "Equality of Harmony"—so fearful are our contemporaries of deception in friendship. Friendship was more honored in the sixteenth century. Montaigne has touchingly said, in speaking of his friendship with La Boétie: "If I am urged to explain why I loved him, I think I can only express it by saying, because he was himself and because I am myself." Voltaire called friendship a marriage of the soul between two virtuous men.

The pursuit of a great aim and common sacrifices are the fertile soil in which this sentiment grows. Thus the martyrs of the Italian Risorgimento who were pursued, persecuted, and escaped prison and death through exile

alone, formed strong friendships. We all know about Goethe's friendship with d'Eckerman, and in our day the publication of Renan's correspondence with Berthelot, of Gambetta's with Spuller, proves that the second half of the nineteenth century was also capable of producing great friendships. This sentiment was formerly equal to a patent of intellectual and moral nobility. Kindness of heart was not sufficient. To this must be added superiority of intellect. Without feeling and sensibility, friendship was arid and cold, breaking at the first adverse shock like dried wood. When I meet two persons bound by a friendship that has braved time and absence, and between whom confidence and intimate communion of mind has survived all changes, I bow before them, feeling that I am in the presence of two beings to whom the gods have accorded rare privileges.

Saint Beuve declares that human friendships are feeble things if God has no place in them, and in truth, to create and sustain them is difficult without some form of belief in a divinity.

An ardent patriotism, the pursuit of some generous ideal, the cult of virtue as it was understood by the ancients, may replace faith as

a tie between two souls; but these forms of the ideal, what are they if not a religion without dogma, behind which God hides? The first condition then in a true friendship is faith in the divine and respect for the human soul.

The small-hearted and ordinary are incapable of real and disinterested affection, for how can they reconcile themselves to love in others the vulgarities that fill their own souls? Superior natures discern weaknesses and shallows in the characters of others, without losing faith in human nature, and search in the ashes for the spark that may still be burning. Commonplace people do not make distinctions. They are unconscious of all that is noble and generous, and if some accident reveals to them these qualities in another, they quickly turn away, for to look too long, gives them a disagreeable sensation of their own inferiority.

To aspire, not only to the shadow of friendship, but to its deepest, highest realities, a certain mental and moral distinction is necessary. Many intelligent and honorable men and women are, however, incapable of feeling true friendship,—some because of skepticism or barrenness of nature; others through selfishness; and many from natural timidity that

seals the lips and kills all expansiveness. Hamilton wrote, "I have given up the friendship of two men; one because he has never spoken to me about himself, and the other because he has never spoken to me about myself."* Undoubtedly these were two bad symptoms. When the outpourings are only from one heart, friendship is too one-sided, and bears within it the germs of destruction. Why is one friend so silent? Is it because he lacks confidence and doubts the interest his comrade feels in what concerns him? An absolute reserve indicates weakness in friendship, which being the reverse of love can only subsist with a certain equilibrium.

Moral avarice,† that often plays such a large part in the relations between men, has also contributed to stifle in many hearts impulses towards friendship. Snobbishness has done the rest, and in order not to erase the word friendship from the dictionary, we give the name of friend to any one who, through position or influential connections, can serve our interests. Nothing could be more at variance with the spirit of the gospel than this

*The reference seems to be to Anthony Hamilton, the author of the famous "Memoirs of Gramont." — *Tr.*

†See "Ames Dormantes." Chapter, Moral Avarice.

manner of regarding the relations between men. The old pagans give us noble lessons in this respect, lessons that should make the Christian blush. We should endeavor to re-establish the prestige of friendship, and teach the young to cultivate and apprehend it, until the day comes when their desire shall be satisfied, and they meet one who perhaps will become, what La Boétie was to Montaigne, a maker of joy.

Friendship can be divided into several classes. We have friends who love us because they have loved our parents, and to whom we owe a respectful attachment. We have friends among the young, for whom we feel a protecting affection, and, lastly, personal friends with whom we are on terms of equality. Among our friends, we must distinguish between those whom circumstances have imposed upon us, and those whom we have deliberately chosen. The former are the companions of the school room, or play ground; they fill a peculiar place in our hearts, accompany us through life from childhood to the grave, and play an important part in our lives. But we rarely feel for our childhood's friend that intellectual and moral sympathy of which celebrated friendships have been composed. These meetings are reserved

for later in life when our mind is formed and when we have from childhood passed to youth.

Near St. Paul's Gate in Rome, and not far from the monument of Caius Sestius, is the Protestant cemetery of Testaccio, the most poetic resting place that one could dream of in which to sleep the last sleep. Oleanders and roses run riot about the cypress trees, their brilliant flowers lending a touch of color to the dark leaves and rigid outlines of these guardians of the sepulcher. In the highest part of this Garden of Tears a long tombstone, enclosed within a hedge of blue iris, marks Shelley's last resting place. Alongside lies a second marble slab; beside the great English lyric poet another sleeps—his friend, Trelawny, who, surviving him for more than sixty years, desired that his body should be transported to Rome, to be laid to rest near the poet whom he loved, but could not save from the southern waves, wherein perished one of England's glories. In Trelawny's faithful soul nothing could ever efface the memory of the friend of his youth; neither long years nor new affections, nor absence from the country filled with his memory, for it was on the shores of the Mediterranean, in the presence of Lord Byron,

that, according to the antique rite, was burned the dead body of the author of "Prometheus Unbound."*

Before these two tombs one stands and reflects upon the immeasurable difference that separates great souls, for whom time means nothing, from the anemic souls of to-day, to whom the word yesterday conveys no meaning. A little envy enters into this feeling of inferiority, for man is only happy and of value in the measure that he can feel. All the rest

*Trelawny, with his friend Edward E. Williams, first met Shelley and Byron at Pisa, in January, 1822. This was the beginning of a memorable friendship. In July of the same year, Shelley and Williams sailed in a small boat from Leghorn, bound for Spezia. Trelawny intended to accompany them in a yacht belonging to Byron, but some circumstance detained him in port at Leghorn. With his sails still furled, he watched from Byron's boat through a spyglass Shelley's boat, as it sailed away, until a fog enveloped it. Trelawny was thus the last person to see the boat as it disappeared. A squall soon came up and the boat was overwhelmed by it, Shelley and Williams being drowned. The bodies were afterwards thrown up on the shore at Viareggia, and were there burned in the presence of Trelawny and Byron. Trelawny, who superintended the arrangements for the burning, rescued from the flames the heart of Shelley, which was buried with his ashes afterwards in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome, in grounds that were purchased by Trelawny. Trelawny's friendship with Byron continued until Byron's death, in 1823. He accompanied him on his last visit to Greece, and was present at the funeral arrangements after the poet's death in Missolonghi. Trelawny died in 1881. He published several volumes, the most famous of which is "Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron."—*Tr.*

possesses only a relative value, except when it serves to nourish and ennoble sentiment and feeling.

Modern education is right in making war upon false sentimentality; but to deprive mankind of a single one of the true feelings that soften life is an abominable crime, and in any way to diminish them a perilous mistake.

Friendship, apart from the direct rôle it plays in our lives should be the foundation of all other sentiments. When united in ties of blood it strengthens and uplifts the tie. A daughter occupies a much more important place in the hearts of her father or mother if she be also a friend. Friendship between brothers and sisters, tho rare, is a tremendous help in life; the members of a family may love each other, without being friends, friendship implying intimate communion between two beings, born of certain conditions of mentality, sensibility, and character that it is impossible to create at will. Friendship is a precious element, even in love; being the corner-stone of all unions that endure, inside or outside of marriage. Without it no attachment will wear, for it is to the affections what oxygen is to the air we breathe, and in the family as in love, when friendship exists its influence is indirect.

In other relations, on the contrary, it directly influences the individual and procures for him or her lasting joys. Disinterestedness is its keynote. "The strongest friendships are but a community of interests." This saying of Saint-Evremond is absolutely false, or else its author decorates with the name of friendship utilitarian methods that are in fact a negation of the sentiment.

If we probe the human heart to its depths, we find the blemishes of selfishness over all its affectionate instincts. The mother who gives her life for her children does it to escape the greater sorrow of losing them; the man, husband or lover, who plunges into the water to save the woman he loves, performs this courageous act because he feels that without her life would be insupportable. In fact, neither acts from a perfectly disinterested motive, while in friendship, unless one is an associate in business, personal interest plays no part in the sacrifices made for one another. To give hearts to friendship, is to uplift them to the noblest manifestations of sentiment, and to assure joys that defy age and the passing years.

Some hold that, to awaken a desire in human beings for sincere and deep friendship is to prepare new occasions for deceptions; for it

means giving a part of one's own soul to another, for whom friendship may represent no more than an appropriate and passing intimacy. These deceptions which cause much suffering could be avoided if we would be satisfied with the banal and fugitive comradeship that is the fashion of the day.

One runs a risk, it is true, but we must be very unlucky, or little intelligent, to be constantly deceived, and not to know the true worth of those whom we choose for our own friends. But, even in this class, will surely be found some true and loving hearts. It must not be believed that friendships can be multiplied indefinitely—to be appreciated they must be rare—although they do not demand the absolute exclusiveness of love. It is possible to have many friends without causing unhappiness to any one of them.

The shades of friendship are infinite; we love such a one for certain qualities she possesses, or certain affinities that appeal to our inner self. We love another for quite different reasons. Beings who are born, live, and die in the same surroundings have only a few friends; they can have no opportunities for making new ones, or, being surrounded by intimacies of long standing, they do not care to

form fresh ties. On the other hand, people who frequently change their habitat, inevitably make new acquaintances. A man cannot live alone for years and be content with written communications only; wherever he is, he feels the need of a closer tie than the banal relationship of superficial intercourse.

Respect is as indispensable in friendship as in love, and is a first condition towards experiencing the true joy of this relationship. We must first respect friendship and afterwards the friend, and we should always speak of him as though he were present and could hear what we are saying. Love can exist without respect, while a suspicion kills friendship. Its merit is just this,—to inspire noble feeling and action in mankind.

In all human affections there always must be the one who kisses, and the one who offers the cheek. The happiest being is the one who gives most, although this assertion can be contested in love, because of wounded pride. Friendship admits of no doubts. The friend who feels the most deeply, tastes of the higher joys. To be loved is sweet, but to love another is a sweeter, more exquisite happiness. As vanity plays no part in friendship, and reciprocity being always assured in one way or the

other, no bitterness awaits the loyal heart who loves the most, and the prospect is always one of pleasure.

“Women love more deeply than men, but men are more sincere and profound in their friendship.” La Bruyère is no longer the fashion, but certain reflections of his remain true and just. As a matter of fact, women abuse friendship in their everyday relations; they know little of what this word really means. History does not tell us of any great friendships between women. There have been some feminine attachments, but always between a woman of an elevated position and an inferior, thus a servant or a slave for her mistress, or a lady-in-waiting for her sovereign. But these are not relations between equals, and to-day such sentiments do not seem to blossom any more in the human heart.

The further south we go, the fewer friendships we find between women. In northern countries the relationship is better understood. There women seek each other's company—perhaps because they are more cultivated. Unmarried women and widows often live together sharing their loneliness: they emulate each other in loving service, each endeavoring to be a consolation to the other. Such cases are rare;

when they do happen in France and Italy, rather than live with some friend they love, French and Italian women prefer to seek the shelter of a convent, or to accept the hospitality of a relative, with whom they have no tie of affection. Is this a lack of moral independence, the result of an anemic mentality, or does it indicate indifference to every sentiment that is not love? Women who do not cultivate friendships with their own sex, in the true sense of the word—for ordinary relations between women abound—deprive themselves of a powerful moral support. To know that in this vast world faithful souls exist who share our sorrows, rejoice in our joys, and who resent the wrongs done us, gives us courage to live.

During a visit, or in the midst of some rejoicing, everything is transformed, whether ennui or pleasure, by the presence of a real friend. We no longer feel the chill of indifference or of hostility, and manifestations of jealousy or a desire to belittle us, pass unnoticed. A look, an answering smile, tells us we are understood and sympathized with, that there is harmony. All is done calmly, without the agitation and interior tremblings of love.

Souls who have experienced the pure and profound joys of friendship cannot understand why others do not aspire to these joys, and they long to impress a desire for friendship upon the moral education of both men and women.

I have been exceptionally happy in my friendships,* but I try to be objective in speaking of them and not to generalize from any one particular case. I know that friendship between women is rare, very rare; still it does exist. If I have had the good fortune to possess true friends, why should not others have the same chance—for they exist everywhere. I am not alone in possessing the faculty of attracting hearts capable of a loyal friendship. If I have been blessed in this particular matter, it is perhaps, because I have always believed in friendship, and have made of it a cult. I have known through friendship, moments of perfect mutual understanding, in that absolute sympathy which gives us a foretaste, alas, fugitive! of what fraternity will be in that future existence to which we all who believe in immortality are called.

*I ask my reader's indulgence for speaking about myself, but I should like to take this occasion to tell my friends what I owe to their friendship.

When between two women, one of those profound affections whose calming influence is felt even from afar really exists, enveloping them mutually with its tender protection, it seems as though they had no need to look after themselves, that another had undertaken this charge. Sometimes friendship is an intellectual affinity, a manner of mutual and perfect understanding of the complexities of the life of the affections, and of seizing the humor or the pathos of life's comedy. It often also takes the form of active devotion, intelligent, faithful and reciprocal, upon which we can always count in difficult moments—a sure counsel and a harmony of attentions that brighten dark days. Examples could be multiplied of what women can be to each other when they really love.

Friendship between men is stronger, but between women more tender. And why should this sentiment be so rarely developed among women? First, because of the vanity that inclines the daughters of Eve to see only a rival in her sister, thus inciting them to mutual attack. And, secondly, women have a poor opinion of their own value, and what they owe to each other, which prevents all feeling of joint responsibility and true confidence. Their in-

tellectual progress ought to serve, therefore, to bring them together, not in one common career of frivolity and incompetence, but in mutual respect as the result of their own efforts.

Men ridicule friendships between women because they do not believe in them; for experience has taught them to what point a woman is ready to sacrifice her so-called best friend, to soothe her own vanity or promote a flirtation. They believe, moreover, that women have recourse to these intimacies, in order to console themselves for disasters in love, and at the first sign of a return of the passionate element into their lives they fling friendship overboard with a light heart. Often, alas! this opinion is well founded; but there are many exceptions, and it depends upon women to change the opinion of men in this respect.

I would like to speak here of another kind of friendship, a subject on which both sexes are very skeptical — friendship between men and women. Many contend that it does not exist, or see in it only a mask for love. The latter is invariably suspected. The modern habit of comradeship tends, however, to facilitate these friendships, and coeducation gives them a social sanction which is most happy in

its results. A man can really know a woman only by becoming her friend. In certain cases it is undoubtedly true that friendship drifts into love; but at least love thus created knows why it loves, and the chances of future happiness are greatly increased. If friendship between two of the same sex is a great joy in life, between a man and a woman it is an uplifting, satisfying relationship; a mutual exchange of sentiments and ideas foreign to one or the other of the two friends. Confidences however, can not be of an intimate nature, for a man, from a physical point of view, has less modesty; morally he is more modest than a woman. A man's friendship gives to a woman a more complete sense of protection, and a woman's friendship for a man bestows upon him certain sweet consolations that intimacy with another man could never give.

Such friendships resemble love, without its plenitude or its torments, and can only be developed in an atmosphere of complete freedom. It is a state wherein the soul is at peace and self-possessed. No positive barrier interposes itself to prevent the birth of this sentiment; but a thousand secret ones prevent its development. In the first place, there is the false interpretation of society as to jealousy by a husband

or a lover; in certain countries the opposition of parents, and a thousand other prejudices so deeply rooted in souls that no one has yet been able to shake them off in Europe. A woman needs great independence of character or position, boldly to avow a masculine friendship, if she does not wish to encounter unkind and ill-natured remarks. Middle age is no protection, and suggestive smiles are exchanged when a gray-haired man and woman are seen too often together.

We must ignore these ill-natured allusions; friendship is worth it, but all women have not this courage, nor are they so situated that it is possible to cultivate such friendships. However, the advantage of this contact of mind between the two sexes is immense; one recognizes at once a woman who has men friends by her breadth of view, and the man with friends among women is distinguished by something finer, more courteous and well-regulated than his fellows.

Formerly Italian men were distinguished for their excessive amiability; the reason being that, having no country and no public duties, they consecrated the greater part of their time to the society of women. This was a self-evident mistake, for when a man in the prime

of life passes his entire time in exchanging ideas with women, his existence seems useless and almost ridiculous. But to have a woman's influence in his life is useful and beneficial to a man, provided his friend be well chosen. If he chooses unwisely, his whole moral existence must feel the effect, for a bad woman can be equally dangerous both as a wife and as a mistress. Mean, intriguing, untruthful, she is like a stone attached to the neck of a drowning man; he sinks with it and is unable to rise again to the surface.

It is usually stated that men never can feel sincere friendship for a woman, that they never love her disinterestedly, but I have known examples of devotion—without ulterior motives—in men that absolutely contradict this assertion. A man can be a friend to one woman, even while loving another, but not the material and ordinary man; he is incapable of such friendships. A man passionately in love with another woman said one day to a friend, "I once asked myself which of you I would save first, if I saw you both in peril of death, and my heart answered it would be you." "To return at once and die with the other woman," smilingly replied the friend, yet never doubting his sincerity. He spoke the truth; it was

she, his friend, he would have saved. Youthful talk, some will say this is, but years do not count in this kind of sentiment, for it belongs to all ages and all latitudes.

I have been told that formerly young men in certain Asiatic tribes, when arrived at the age of discretion, choose a woman friend, whom they made their guide, counsellor and moral support. They had to show absolute confidence in her and take to this friend all difficulties both of a private and political nature. But this woman was to be held sacred, and should love replace friendship, both were immediately condemned to death without hope of a reprieve.

The foregoing statement shows that the boast we make of our present civilization is not justified, other civilizations having had a higher conception of what is best for a man's soul, even when a little barbarism has been mixed up with it. Moreover, in many things, in spite of our hypocrisies and our pretensions to fraternity, are we not still barbarians? Contemporary history loudly proclaims the fact.

The cultivation of friendship indicates in any case a high state of morality, for, as Cicero has said, speaking through a wise Greek, "Everything that lives and moves in the world

is united through friendship, and disintegrated by discord." Hence friendship is the essential basis of life, and as such should be honored, sought for and taught.

XI

WOMAN, THE COMFORTER

Une femme dont la maternité s'étend à tous, il faudrait s'agenouiller devant elle à chaque minute, car elle reflète le divin.—“*Ames Dormantes.*”

This chapter, as its title indicates, is especially addressed to women. I believe firmly that their condition in life with regard to men can be greatly ameliorated, and that if they wish, they can obtain from them a moral and intellectual consideration that—except in a few rare instances—has heretofore been denied them. They will then be in a position to assure if they possess it, their own happiness, or to learn to live without it, if fate has not smiled upon them.

In any case, what is often ambiguous in a woman's position, will in a large measure disappear, and they, like men, will be entitled to a place in the sunshine of life.

But in spite of the amelioration reserved for them in the future, the destiny of women is fraught with difficulties and sufferings that nothing can change, for their destiny depends

not only upon her nature, but upon faculties and defects in the very essence of woman. Her physical weakness — altho young girls of to-day are building for themselves a stronger constitution by out-of-door sport—her frail nervous system, her liability to certain attacks of illness, a style of dress that restricts the free movements of her body,— all these matters inevitably place a woman physically in an inferior position to a man. Legally and economically also, her position leaves much to be desired, and this will not be changed in the near future; for, even under the most favorable conditions, reforms regarding her will be accomplished slowly. Man will remain at the head of the family and the outlets for his activities will be increased, while a woman's work will still continue to command less remuneration than a man's; and naturally so, since a woman cannot so easily aspire to honorary careers, nor enter into speculations that yield fabulous fortunes to a man who dares. Daring and success bring power.

“Might is right,” being an accepted law—and I fear no degree of civilization will ever change this iniquitous decree—the majority of women must always be dependent upon men. Every situation of dependence presup-

poses a certain humiliation, reflected in other relations. Not only is man the stronger, but it is he who chooses the woman. Women are endeavoring to change this custom, but a feeling of contempt on the part of men is all she has thus far achieved. In offering herself she loses prestige, and with it the power she once held. To convince herself of this fact, she has only to enter any contemporary drawing room, and then go back in memory to twenty years ago. She will remark to-day that men are no longer eager in their attentions. The initiative has passed to women. There are undoubtedly exceptions, but the majority belong to a certain class of people and sentiments, that do not enter into the present discussion.

Most young men of our day have an immense opinion of themselves, especially where women are concerned. They are persuaded that they have only to desire to please, in order to find favor, to be accepted as husbands, and to achieve difficult and brilliant victories. They are convinced, moreover, that women live only to be chosen by one of themselves, and naturally in the face of her willingness, they experience the disdain of the purchaser for wares offered in too great profusion. The eagerness of certain women and their attempts to solicit

homage not spontaneously offered, justify this vain attitude in men. When young men come to know young girls better, their eyes will be opened to differences existing between them; they will then see that, if some are bold and lacking in dignity, the best type are not an easy conquest, and that to merit their smiles is well worth a struggle.

The men who are intelligent and fine enough to understand that women can live without them, are still rare. The majority still cherish narrow and old-fashioned ideas on the subject. They are persuaded that every woman, whether for herself, her daughter, or sister, has only one aspiration—marriage at any cost, and better any kind of man than none at all. When forced to admit the contrary, they attribute it to a poor nature, to selfishness, or to inordinate vanity. If a woman be cold, men regard this as a defect, and make of it a subject of reproach. If she be passionate and tender, they believe her ready to succumb to temptation. If she is deceived, they laugh at her, but should she revenge herself they call her by brutal names. These vulgar judgments are, alas! only too common, and form an atmosphere about women that is humiliating to them. Hence physically, economically and

legally, woman is inferior; morally she is considered necessary for the propagation of the race and for man's happiness. Nevertheless, she must always wait upon his good pleasure, and maintain, from a social point of view, an inferior position with regard to her lord.

Audacity and pretensions to equality will not change the position of woman. She must accomplish it with other weapons. But even when men shall have learned to respect woman and to respect love, unless she can better direct her life, the condition of the daughters of Eve will ever and always be a source of sorrow and disillusion. The woman's only means of raising herself lies in a development of the maternal feeling, and in pouring it forth upon all about her. When she learns to regard all men as beings requiring her care, every feeling of abasement and bitterness must disappear from her heart. We cannot be humiliated by those whom we protect and console. Thus can a woman gain a superiority she can oppose to that which a man must always exercise over her in other ways. If, on the contrary, she abandons her maternal rôle and proclaims her right to think only of herself and her own pleasures, she will go, I fear, from sorrow to sorrow. Her dignity consists in a solicitude

that, extending beyond the child of her own flesh, embraces all who stand in need of her maternal and moral help.

Has God done well in creating men and women, and in ordaining the continuation of the race? This question is impossible of full solution, even by the most learned. But the fact remains imperious and commanding. To dream of separating these two parts of humanity, even in order to attain the highest possible ideal, would be absurd and beyond all possibility. Therefore, it is not by separating herself from man, that woman must seek for the amelioration of her condition. She must, on the contrary, interest herself in man more objectively than she does now, interest herself in his intellectual life, in his affections, and in the full development of all his powers. In this rôle woman would be simply admirable, but it demands great breadth of mind.

I know several women whom I call "the consolers," who remind me of Dante's sonnet to Beatrice: "Clothed with dignity and gentleness, the seal of a great and profound serenity stamps her brow." Such women are neither nervous nor restless; they do not seek admiration; do not raise their voices to attract attention; neither do they perpetually wear a

fixed smile. They are capable of love and suffering, and pity is the dominating note in their hearts. A wrong done to themselves excites no bitterness; they are rather saddened by the moral deformity the wrong represents. They are ever ready to dress the wounds that bleed, and to dry humanity's tears. The dignity of such women can never be compromised, even tho they might be swept on by a great love, forgetting prudence and social laws. Their patience, their compassion for the sufferings, weaknesses and errors of those who love, give to them the cachet of maternity and self-abnegation, and that saves them from being classed with other women of their world in the same position. The mission of consoler that in the divine plan devolves upon the woman, is unquestionably accomplished most surely and effectively through a pure and well-ordered life.

The woman who lives up to this high moral standard is sheltered from all possible humiliation. The unjust and brutal man's point of view grieves, but does not touch her. When she sees a man coarse, sensual, and selfish, she absents herself. If any such sad specimen form a part of her own circle, the trial is great, but her womanly dignity remains intact.

She judges, but tries to pity rather than despise the sinner, and waits in silence the moment when God will humble the pride of the guilty and the proud. Then only does she open her arms in an impulse of maternal compassion.

But, you will say, one must be perfect to fill this rôle, as if every rôle did not demand perfection, provided we fulfil it as we should. At the theater, for example, are we not often obliged to content ourselves with ordinary actors, whom we listen to and watch with pleasure? This same fact applies to all branches of art, and to all social relations. Without doubt, gentleness and strength, compassion, and perspicacity, patience and dignity, form altogether that rare and perfect character which is seldom met with. Such a character resembles the perfect type of beauty, of which we only see remote imitations, but to which every woman aspires; some making despairing efforts to approach the ideal as nearly as possible. Why do they not use the same energy, and put themselves beyond the pale of suffering, by accepting the maternal attitude, a quality that all women possess instinctively.

To this, objection can be made, that women are tired of effacement and self-abnegation.

But who asks her to efface herself? On the contrary, she must labor with all her strength for her own development, in order that her qualities and talents may yield their full measure; and that she may reach in all her ideas the heights. In the measure that she is healthy, strong, beautiful or pleasing to look at, in the same degree that she is intelligent and cheerful, so will her mind be cultivated and void of prejudices; so in a like measure will her prestige be augmented, and in yet fuller measure will she become the true comforter.

As to self-abnegation—I hesitate to say it, for I shall displease many of my sisters—women can never escape from that. This, I admit, is unjust, but the Great Distributor of joys and sorrows is not answerable to any one, and He created a woman's heart for self-sacrifice. An openly selfish woman is a being without charm and with no definite place in life. This is so true that the most self-centered women endeavor to dissimulate their aridity of heart under a false exterior of interest and sentiment. Men, on the contrary, parade their selfishness and are even proud of it, all unconscious of how lowering and vulgarizing in its effect is the absorbing occupation of attending to one's own well-being and personal

interests. But this attitude and pronounced individualism is less repugnant in them than it is in women.

The selfish woman, as I said before, has not the right to exist, except as an agent for the reproduction of her kind. Anything that she may do that is good and great will be inspired by her maternal sentiment. In art, poetry and literature, a woman's worth is measured by the depths and greatness of her heart and soul. These she gives to others, according to her talent and ability, in beautiful pictures, in poetry or prose. Woman is above all the educator; we may see this in any school, and why? Precisely because in her teaching she gives herself, and consequently exercises the greatest influence over her pupils. Take this talent from her and let her cultivate selfishness, and she falls below any man, even in elementary teaching.

When a woman decides that she wants to enjoy life to its fullest, taste all its satisfactions, and take part in all its pleasures, she suffers an immediate and painful demoralization. She cannot rival men on this ground. To establish an equilibrium between them she should have more vices than he, and degradations follow. When youth has gone — altho the

modern woman holds her own in a remarkable way—her value goes with it, while age increases a man's importance by the authority he acquires and the duties he assumes. A mature woman is only tolerated for her qualities of goodness—indulgence, wisdom, and moderation, and for the affection she lavishes upon those about her. But these are not the qualities that can be suddenly cultivated when one begins to grow old; they must be practised in youth and grow and develop with years. Makers of joy, those whose object has always been to create happiness about them, never grow old, and if wrinkles line the face, we feel that an inexhaustible spring of goodness nourishes their hearts. Within them there is a perpetual process of renewing, as if youth, and even the childhood of the future life towards which they are traveling, cast its rays on the twilight of their lives.

In Plato's "Phaedo"—Cébes the Theban supposes that we all carry a child within us, and this child must be taught not to fear death; Giovanni Pascoli, the Italian poet, taking this idea from the Greek philosopher, sees in this child the inspirer of all that is good, pathetic, and beautiful in this world. It is he who wept and smiled in Homer, and he it is who is the

last vestige of our superior origin. Might it not be rather the dawn of an existence that we have yet to live? This child does not exist in every one; his presence is never revealed to arid hearts, but is found, however, in all makers of joy.

I know a woman whose first thought in the morning is what she can do to make others happy, and when she has cheered some fellow-being her beautiful blue eyes burn with a wonderful flame. Very different is she from the contemplative, of whom I wrote in the chapter on "Makers of Joy." This dear woman is still young, active, busy, and no bodily fatigue ever interferes with the object she pursues. She multiplies her activities, and gives herself, and almost experiences pleasure in the kind of weariness she contracts. "Useless," morose people say: "she sacrifices herself and creates ungrateful men and women. If she really did something useful. But to give some one a passing moment of pleasure, what is it?" Do they mean it counts for nothing? On the contrary, it is of infinite value. To be a dispenser of smiles in life, is equivalent to giving bread to a starving man, or a garment to cover the shivering limbs of the poor; and in the divine balance which will outweigh the other?

This friend, a maker of joy, whom I once reproached with working for and saying too many agreeable things to, undeserving people, replied in these tender and human words: "We must encourage one another a little, for life is so sad." Yes, all of us have need of encouragement, even the privileged beings of this world. The secret is knowing just the word that touches and uplifts, and it is the intuitive and those who are in constant communion with the divine, who find this word spontaneously. Ordinarily we do not reflect upon the importance of certain things we say. We speak and act the greater part of our time automatically, and are astonished when years later we are told: "On such a day you said so and so to me, and those words had a decisive influence on my life."

Every one does not possess in the same degree the wonderful power of influencing others, but all can do something for the happiness of their fellow men. Super-sensitive and timid natures have, for example, an inward need for tenderness and words of praise. It is an indispensable nourishment for them; not because they are vain, but because, always doubting their own ability, they have constantly to be raised in their own estimation. A delicate

woman, without children, and married to a superior, but occupied and pre-occupied man, suffered intensely when her husband neither perceived nor commented upon a new costume, or upon some ornament she had added to the drawing room. Never a word of praise escaped his lips. One day she told him the sorrow this caused her. "But what do you want?" he replied, distressed. "I don't know how to observe such things. What must I do?"

The wife reflected a moment, and then the two arranged that when there was anything unusual the wife was to make him a certain sign. His attention called, he would then understand, look, and admire. "And now I am satisfied," she said, a little ashamed of her childishness. "What he says will not be spontaneous I know, and yet I shall be pleased to hear it; it will brighten my life."

This absurd, and yet touching, incident reveals a state of mind that certain natures cannot understand, but which is, nevertheless, more common than we think. Even the most strong minded bear within themselves a hidden sensitiveness which they do not admit, but that a tender and sympathetic word can sooth. Our most important duty is to sustain courage, for so long as courage lasts, life is supportable; it

can even be made beautiful under the worst circumstances, for courage is always united to hope, and hope counts for more than happiness in human existence. There are people whose mission it seems to be to labor for their own undoing; they accentuate disagreeably every painful thing, and cut all the wings that pass within their reach. There are others whose presence is uplifting; they awaken energy and can see a silver lining to every cloud. The atmosphere they create is warm and sweet, and in parting from them we feel less keenly the chill of the outer world.

We meet men in the vanguard of great and new ideas whose influence is felt by every one, but rarely do they understand how to be consolers. This rôle nature leaves in the tender hands of women. Certain women possess in a marvellous degree the power to repair; we feel it in their touch, they bring us peace, renew our strength, and lay their hands so gently on our wounds that they seem to be healed miraculously. Such women give an interest in life to those who have lost it, and they even sometimes cure the terrible *Weltschmerz*.

To fill the rôle of consoler, which alone places feminine dignity completely beyond all attack, certain qualities are indispensable, and

in the first place gentleness, for in gentleness a woman finds the plenitude of her strength. Should she not possess the natural gift, she who ignores its power, or neglects to acquire it, is guilty of a great error, for gentleness is her most effective weapon. Naturally, I do not speak of a foolish gentleness and sweetness, daughter of weakness or fear, void of perspicacity and all power of resistance; but of the intelligent gentleness, that accompanies strength of soul, and a certain delicacy of expression. Nothing can resist this for long, for its power is irresistibly felt, both by the good and by the bad. The woman who is gentle and persevering in what she wishes to do, is sure to obtain a great influence over those about her.

Some will reply that in marriage the gentle women are always victims; if they are, it is because they have neither intelligence, reason, force nor charm. Did they possess these qualities, and added to them gentleness, they would triple their power. This last quality is indispensable to the prestige of woman. Without gentleness and sweetness, she easily becomes impatient, irritable and ridiculous. A woman possessing a loud voice and whose gestures are violent, forfeits her dignity and can never

be attractive. Anger that shows itself outwardly disfigures the most beautiful face. It is true there are times when one must be angry and know when and how to manifest a just indignation, but these paroxysms, to be effective, must be rare.

There is another element, too much neglected when joined to gentleness, which increases a hundredfold woman's power; this is cheerfulness. To be gay and amusing, to see the best side of everything, helps to render life easy and agreeable for every one. All men, even great personalities, feel the need at times of being amused and distracted. A mother who possesses, or has acquired these qualities is a comforter, and unless she is surrounded by monsters and misanthropes she will make herself loved and obeyed.

Silent women also can be in their own way efficacious comforters, for they think more, and thought has greater force than words. Women who talk a great deal say irritating things, argue about trifles and, in this way, lose authority. Woman, the comforter, is not vain, for vanity prevents the development of altruistic qualities; she must endeavor, however, to make herself as pleasing as possible, for certain exterior graces exercise a wonderful

influence. Some very virtuous women are too forgetful of this fact and thus lose the power to console and comfort.

Anxious, gloomy natures, however excellent they may be in themselves, can never be classed with comforters, for the atmosphere that surrounds them repels. They are avoided rather than sought after, and as they are always demanding consolation for themselves, they can never become consolers. Human beings like plants instinctively seek light, warmth and strength, and turn naturally to those who possess or have acquired these qualities. I insist upon these last words, for I am persuaded that, with good-will, we can modify or acquire that which we are lacking. This is possible, especially in youth, for there is an elasticity and a malleability about youth that makes transformation possible. But we must desire and labor to overcome our defects of character and disposition, for later on when mental habits are formed, subjective work becomes difficult and requires greater effort.

We meet in society young girls who are sullen, pretentious and selfish, but there are many who are charming and seem to be dowered with every gift and accomplishment. What comforters they will make in the future,

if contact with the world does not spoil them. The mother herself is often the first to lead her daughters astray by teaching or example. She throws them among surroundings that develop their vanity, or confides them to the care of selfish persons, who convert them to their own principles, and in time these girls go to swell the ranks of ordinary and dangerous women.

To be a comforter another quality is essential, — calmness. Without that, as Ernest Legouvé justly says, nothing great is accomplished, and no action is efficacious. This writer does not speak of the calmness of a sluggish nature, but a calmness born of wisdom, experience, and perfect self-control. The woman who has been endowed with it, or who has acquired it by patient work with her soul, will always compass results superior to those obtained by impulsive and restless natures. Gentleness, cheerfulness and calmness form then a triangle on which rests woman's influence in the world, and without these three coefficients, a woman can do little for herself and still less for others.

Women follow the fashion with extreme docility; they lend themselves to its eccentricities, and accept the inconvenient garments

it imposes with servile obedience. In this matter men are more intelligent, for no tailor would ever succeed in imposing upon them a garment without pockets, or one that interfered with their freedom of movement. This same submission to orders and recognition of them as superior, could be exploited for good. If a certain refinement of soul became the fashion, and this banner was hoisted by distinguished and well-known women, others would quickly rally round it. At the command of Rousseau, his contemporaries applied themselves to cultivate a love of nature which until then had been unknown. The eloquent voice of Jean Jacques might be replaced by the collective voice of well-bred, superior women who would make war on all vulgarity. Hence we must search out and discover who are the fine souls, and must individualize the elect.

There occurs in a recent novel, written by a man of great talent, a beautiful phrase relating to a woman, that I will cite here for my readers: "When she became aware of her own goodness, she loved herself for it, and would have liked to embrace herself, so great was her satisfaction. If she read an eloquent book depicting a pure woman, she was con-

scious of a sensation of extreme purity and all its infinite delicacies and refinement.”

It is a great pity that eloquent books on modesty in women, are no longer written. Recent statistics show that even chaste England has surrendered to a style of literature where offenses against certain moral laws are represented as social duties, and written about with shocking freedom. Feminine moralists hold the palm in boldness of expression, and rival one another as to who shall advance the farthest on this slippery ground. They resemble Madame Tallien and Madame Hamelin under the Directory in their struggle to defy public opinion by appearing in the fewest and scantiest garments.

There is, therefore, urgent need to revive the homage formerly paid to delicacy of mind. A taste for proper and pure things should once more become the fashion, for it forms a part of all that is beautiful in life. Doubtless we shall encounter in this endeavor much that is false and artificial. But what of that? It is inevitable in everything. Provided that we allow what is real to develop, our end is attained. How many natures, created for the heights, are dragging out a miserable existence on low levels? They have neglected to de-

velop their wills, have not learned that "one can be enraptured with one's own soul"* and having need of some intoxicant have sought for it elsewhere.

There exist in life subtle and secret influences† that belong to no known category and to which it is impossible to give a name. Are they due to magnetism? Are they the action of the subconscious? Are they the great mysterious host, who live within us, who speak at certain moments determining our actions and words? The mystery that envelops these subtleties will perhaps never be solved, but one thing is certain: those who exercise this power possess great vibrating souls and perfect self-control. "True Liberty," says Montaigne, "lies in self-conquest." To have conquered self, is to wield infinite power and control over others. To love the beautiful, to pursue it, to attain to it in oneself, is the surest way of communicating this love to our fellow men.

Women who fight with these weapons, selflessness and love of the beautiful, are sure of victory, if they persevere. They will make admirable comforters, not only for the man who

* Victor Hugo.

† See chapter on "Equality."

is father, son, husband or brother, but for other women, both within and without the family circle. We can do so much for one another, if we only will. I do not speak of material gifts,—to be efficacious they should be large and generously given; such almsgiving is the rare privilege of the few; but we can give of our minds and our hearts. When the desire to aid, support and console one another has penetrated hearts, women will no longer feel in the same degree envy, jealousy and hatred. Attractions and sympathies, these impulses they are so conscious of, will cease to be trammelled by formidable barriers raised by rivalries. They will see in each other only sisters subject to the same trials, supporting the same tyrannies, exposed to the same sufferings, and the hands that so often wound will be extended to embrace and caress.

Why struggle, why hate each other, and be mutually guilty of wrongdoing? Life is so short. For those who believe, it is a moment between two eternities; for those who deny, it is a wicked comedy in which all the actors are sooner or later unhappy victims.

